

**The Basis for Cooperation in the Gulf Region: An Assessment  
of the Gulf Cooperation Council**

**Submitted By:**

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my beloved Parents; Saleh, my greatest teacher; Brothers and Sisters; my Wif; and all those who taught or helped me at some stage in the past.*



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## ABSTRACT

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional alliance grouping the six oil- and gas-rich Arabian states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain, was founded in 1981 with the purported aim of “effect[ing] coordination, integration and inter-connection between Member States in all fields in order to achieve unity between them” (GCC Charter: Article 4). Most political observers, nevertheless, insist that this alliance was born out of a common concern among these rich but sparsely populated and militarily vulnerable states’ for their security and political stability within a politically volatile region, and the need for a regional alliance with sufficient capability to safeguard their interests, sovereignty and political stability.

This study was undertaken with a set of interacting aims in mind; besides the subsidiary aim of examining the structure and operation of the GCC from the perspective of competing theoretical approaches to federalism with a view to exploring their viability vis-à-vis the case of integration which the GCC represents, this study primarily aims at evaluating the GCC, as well as the political and social basis of cooperation, among its member states in the light of attitudes and perceptions within Gulf society. With regard to the former concern, the aim is to consider how useful theories of federalism are in understanding and interpreting the GCC. With regard to the latter concern, the study aims to explore Gulf social perceptions of the factors underlying the emergence of the GCC, its institutions, objectives, policies and problems confronting it with a view to determining the extent and nature of both the attitudinal similarities and discrepancies existing between different social Gulf groups as well as identifying the complex network of historical, socio-cultural and institutional affinities operating across state boundaries within the GCC. To explore perceptions of the policies and aspects of cooperation which the GCC considers central to its efforts to bring about greater unity among its member states, two surveys were undertaken among two contrasting groups: one based on a sample of top-ranking officials at the GCC Secretariat General and another based on a sample of students at Kuwait and Qatar universities.

The thesis opens with several background chapters addressing the practice of and experimentation with federalism and political integration in the Arab world, the role of such socio-political phenomena as tribalism and Arab nationalism in the emergence of the GCC, the GCC’s basic structure and machinery, the regional and international circumstances in which the GCC was created, and the reactions of Arab and non-Arab members of the international community to the emergence of this Arab Gulf alliance. The remainder of the study is devoted to a discussion of the nature of samples drawn on by the study, the strategy employed in drawing the samples, the types of method relied on to obtain data, obstacles met with in the course of fieldwork and to an analysis of the empirical data bearing on the perceptions and attitudes of both types of sample.

Based on the perceptions of the sample groups, the study examines institutions and mechanisms that have been put in place to operationalise the GCC, the nature and level of cooperation in different policy fields as well as the problems that have affected and/or have the potential to affect the progress and future of the GCC. Included here are the internal and/or external factors perceived by GCC officials and citizens to have been instrumental to the creation of the GCC; the level of interest in the GCC amongst Gulf citizens and awareness of its history, institutions and policies; the nature and gravity of problems that GCC officials and citizens perceive as obstructing the efforts of the GCC; the type of areas in which Gulf citizens and GCC officials view the organisation to have made concrete progress.

On the basis of GCC citizens and officials’ attitudes towards the GCC, its *raison d’être*, policies, and problems and the affinities and differences in attitudinal patterns that emerge between these two samples, an attempt is made to determine the efficacy with which the GCC has pursued and implemented its various policies and the nature of progress it has

made to date in the pursuit of a greater integration between member states. From this the study examines the level of satisfaction (or lack of satisfaction) with which the GCC is met within Gulf society. These attitudes are examined against the changing background of Gulf politics, in particular the two major periods of war affecting the area within the last two decades. A concluding chapter summarises the questions the study sets out to answer, the framework it adopts, the qualitative and quantitative methods it relies on to collect the empirical data and the general and broad findings it reaches. It also compares the findings of this work with that of other previous studies and outlines possible future lines of research.



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## **Introduction & Overview**

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### **1.1 Introduction:**

This work is undertaken with one central concern in mind: an evaluation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the political and social basis of cooperation among the member states of this organisation in the light of the perceptions and attitudes of Gulf citizens and policy-makers. A related objective is to examine the structure and operation of the GCC from the perspective of competing theoretical frameworks of federalism so as to explore the feasibility of these approaches vis-à-vis the model of integration initiated by the GCC.

This introductory chapter is structured as following. In the first section is a general statement relating to the current position of the GCC focusing on one of the key problems associated with its creation and working - the gap in opinion and perception of this institution obtaining between GCC policy-makers and citizens of Gulf member states towards the value of the organisation. A further aim of this chapter is to outline the objectives pursued in this research project, discuss the significance of this study and how each of its various strands is integral to the overall conceptual framework. The final section discusses the overall structure of the thesis.

### **1.2 The GCC: A Statement of the Problem:**

The GCC was founded in May 1981 by the heads of the member states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, largely in response to a desire among the Gulf states for an organisation capable of pursuing economic and social cooperation and, of working towards greater harmonisation of the



politics of the member states. The GCC was also founded with aim of creating a powerful regional alliance capable of withstanding and overcoming the political and economic challenges of the volatile climate of Middle Eastern and international politics. The need for a regional alliance with sufficient capability to safeguard the interests, the sovereignty and political stability of its member states is perhaps nowhere more immediate and urgent than in the case of the oil-rich GCC member states with their shared demographic and geographical disadvantages vis-à-vis such neighbouring hostile countries as Iran and Iraq. The sparsely populated nature of all GCC member states, coupled with the small size of three of them (i.e., the mini- states of Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar), puts them in an unfavourable position to rebut the ever-present expansionist ambitions of some Middle Eastern regimes. According to many political analysts (see Qassim (1993), Ommar (1993), al-Kuwari (1992), Peterson (1987)), these disadvantages are sufficient to rule out the possibility of any one of these states fending off external aggression on its own.

Although much has been written about the GCC, its policies, objectives, and achievement in the various sectors of cooperation, a comprehensive evaluation - especially one that approaches the issue from the perspective of the perceptions and attitudes of Gulf citizens themselves - of the organisation, its achievements and its impact has yet to be made. A prominent feature of social perceptions of the GCC is the gulf in opinions as to the impact of its various policies and nature of the obstacles confronting such an organisation. While the GCC political elite claims that the organisation has pursued and eventually succeeded in bringing about a substantial level of cooperation over economic, social, and defence concerns among its member states, Gulf citizens voice different opinions and manifest quite different attitudes towards this institution and its achievements.

Building on the member states' affinities in political systems, social customs, heritage (e.g., religion, history, language, etc.), and such other common features as source of wealth and oil-dependency, the GCC Charter envisioned a community of Gulf nations coming together for the purpose of seeking ways of establishing cooperation, consolidating links, and unifying their policies with the general aim of attaining the

‘unity’ of these states. An assessment of both GCC policy-makers’ and Gulf citizens’ attitudes towards the GCC will not only allow us to determine and explore the perceptions of these two groups, but, more importantly, will also provide us with an important empirical data base by which to evaluate the structure (e.g., machinery and institutions) and operational performance (i.e. policy production, efficiency in policy implementation, etc.) of this organisation as well as to highlight the (nature of) its progress in pursuit of its objectives and/or problems obstructing this progress.

To date few researchers have embarked on an evaluation of the GCC, how it has sought to harmonise policies and the perceptions towards the organisation, and its accomplishments. Most studies have been on the whole no more than descriptive accounts, based on little or no empirical data. Though the GCC has been in place for more than 16 years, Obeid (1996) and al-’Esa & al-Manufi (1985) are the only two researchers who have attempted to assess public perceptions towards, and opinions of, the GCC. Al-’Esa & al-Manufi’s (1985) public opinion study, based on a random sample drawn from four districts of Kuwait, gauged the public’s attitudes towards, and perceptions of the GCC, their level of interest in the organisation, and the extent to which they were knowledgeable about it. Obeid (1996)’s study of attitudes towards the GCC was based on a random selection of an unspecified number of Gulf intellectuals and sought to answer a set of related questions: to what extent are the GCC member states moving towards a state of full integration? and what are the underlying factors favouring and assisting full integration and the obstacles standing in the way of this integration?.

This research project examines the perceptions and attitudes of two contrasting groups, (i) the political elite, based on a sample of policy-makers from the GCC Secretariat General and (ii) a citizen cohort, based on a sample of students at Kuwait and Qatar universities.

The GCC was formed with the prime objective of establishing closer relations among the member states, coordinating their policies in the various fields and setting up firm foundations for economic, social, and political integration. The GCC Charter called for the coordination of policies in a wide range of areas, most notably in foreign policy,



economic and social policy, and in regional security and defence policies. However, according to some local and outside political analysts and observers (e.g., al-Kuwari 1992, Obeid 1995, among others), very little such coordination has been accomplished to date and, to that extent, significant steps have yet to be taken towards achieving the much desired and long-awaited economic and political integration of the Gulf states. The conclusions of these political observers contrast markedly with the repeated assertions of GCC policy-makers that tangible progress has in fact been achieved in the various fields of cooperation among the member states of the GCC. This study is undertaken with the primary aim of evaluating, on the basis of both Gulf citizens' and GCC officials' perceptions of and attitudes towards the GCC, the nature and level of cooperation in different policy fields and the extent to which the organisation represents a step towards some form of political integration in the Gulf.

With the objective of identifying perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the GCC two surveys were carried out in the Gulf among two sets of randomly selected samples (see chapter 7 for an extensive discussion bearing on the design of the two surveys, nature of selected samples, and methods of data collection). The issues assessed included:

- i. What considerations, internal and/or external to the Gulf, do citizens and GCC officials perceive as having been instrumental to the creation of the GCC?
- ii. How informed are Gulf citizens about the GCC and how extensive is their interest in this organisation?
- iii. What is the nature and seriousness of problems that Gulf citizens and GCC officials perceive as obstructing the progress of the GCC?
- iv. In what areas of cooperation (if any) do Gulf citizens and GCC officials perceive the GCC to have made substantial progress?
- v. What kind of social relations and ties prevail among GCC citizens?

In the context of these issues the aim is to explore attitudes towards those policies and aspects of cooperation which the GCC itself deems as central to its efforts to achieve greater unity among its Gulf member states. These include in particular:



1. *The foreign policy field*: A primary objective of the GCC is to coordinate the foreign policies of the various member states with the aim of reaching a common foreign policy to which all member states are able to subscribe. Within the general field of foreign policy, the survey sought to elicit GCC officials' and citizen attitudes on the nature and/or level of GCC cooperation and coordination efforts in reaching common policies in such areas as:

- i. relations with US as a major superpower.
- ii. relations with Russia/ CIS.
- iii. collective reactions to periodic crises.

Closely connected to the foreign policy field, the surveys also sought to explore attitudes towards the GCC's common defence and security arrangements in place to deal with such regional threats as the Iraqi threat before and after the second Gulf war and such regional conflicts as the Yemeni Crisis of 1994.

2: *The economic field*: Since one of the GCC goals has been to strengthen economic cooperation and establish common policies between the member states, the study seeks to understand how important such cooperation was considered to be. In the case of the latter attitudes towards the achievements to date are examined looking at four specific economic issues; oil production, tariff agreements, import policies, and export policies.

3: *The social policy field*: Regarding cooperation among the GCC member states in the broad area of social policy, the two samples were used to elicit attitudes towards and perceptions of the GCC organisations progress in achieving greater coordination specifically in the issues of health care, education, immigration control and environmental protection.

One of the rationales for choosing to examine citizens' and GCC officials' attitudes towards the GCC, its establishment, policies, and problems is to ascertain the extent and nature of both the attitudinal similarities as well as discrepancies existing between GCC policy-makers and Gulf citizens on these diverse but interconnected issues. In light of these attitudinal affinities and differences, an attempt will then be made to determine the efficacy with which the GCC has been implementing its various policies and the nature of progress it has managed to achieve in its pursuit of a greater integration

between the member states since its creation some 16 years ago. In another respect, an exploration of citizens' perceptions of the GCC, its institutions and overall policies allow us to define the level of satisfaction and acceptance with which this organisation is met within Gulf society and, connectedly, establish the level of pragmatism with which the GCC has pursued its objectives.

The research also seeks to explore the nature and magnitude of the gap identified by some writers concerned with the GCC and developments have noted between the GCC political elite and Gulf citizens on perceptions of the institution. Another concern of this study will be to assess Gulf citizens' attitudes on the various aspects of the GCC and its policies with a view to determining whether there has been a change, and if so how dramatic in their attitudes in the wake of the Second Gulf war of 1990. Similarly, an exploration of the views of the GCC political elite on the GCC, its objectives and its problems will help determine whether it has witnessed any (major) changes in outlook and perspectives in the aftermath of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

### **1.3 Research Objectives:**

Central to the concerns of this study is an exploration of the structure of the GCC and other related issues from the perspective of the attitudinal patterns held towards the institution within the Gulf society. Within the context of this broad concern, the study will primarily aim at analysing the degree of cooperation and coordination of common policies between the GCC members in various fields. More specifically, the main objectives pursued in this study will involve investigating the following issues:

1. How useful are theories of federalism in understanding the processes of cooperation between GCC member states, including those which continue to provide an obstacle to greater political cooperation between the member states?
2. The structure and policies of the GCC; in particular how certain common policies bearing on foreign affairs, defence/security, health, education, and immigration have been derived and whether they have been implemented?



3. What is the role of such social and political factors as Tribalism and Arab Nationalism in the emergence of the GCC.
4. What is the civil basis of a federal Gulf society.
5. Citizen and political elite attitudes on and perceptions of the formation, nature, and function of the GCC- based on a randomly selected sample of university students as well as a second and equally randomly selected sample of GCC policy-makers.
6. The status of the GCC as a political and economic regional grouping in the changing world order.

#### **1.4 Research Significance:**

The significance of this study comes from its attempt to develop arguments and reach insights that will contribute to the development of a better understanding of the nature of the GCC as an economic and political Middle Eastern confederacy, its structure, its policies and its overall outlook on cooperation between and integration of its member states.

Although much has been written about the GCC, there has so far been little discussion of the type, level and effectiveness of the cooperation pursued on the part of this organisation. Moreover, previous research on the GCC has yet to address the question theoretically: through adopting federalist arguments in the context of the GCC; with the exception of a 1993 account by al-Ahmad, no previous studies have approached the GCC, its cooperation policies and its short- and long-term integration objectives from the perspective of the theory of federalism in general and from the perspective of this theoretical framework as it has been applied to the case of the Third world, in particular.

### **1.5 Research Scope and Limitations:**

The focus in this thesis is on the attitudes of the Gulf citizens and the Gulf political elite, and more particularly on the attitudes of students and the GCC policy-makers, on the GCC, its policies, objectives and the problems with which it is faced. Relying on both qualitative and quantitative methods of collecting data, this study explores levels of knowledge about the GCC, attitudes towards the organisation and the level of interest in it among a sample randomly selected from a cross-section of Qatari and Kuwaiti students, as well as a sample of GCC high-ranking officials from the GCC Secretariat General. Qualitative assessments of similarities and differences in attitudes and perceptions of the various aspects of the GCC between these two groups provide a basis for an evaluation of the impact of GCC policies on Gulf society and the degree of success it has had in the implementation of its policies including the degree of progress it has achieved in pursuit of an eventual integration of its Gulf member states

The citizen and the political elite surveys conducted for the purposes of this study are limited to a cross-section of final year students from the university of Kuwait (in the state of Kuwait) and the University of Qatar (in the state of Qatar) and to small sample of GCC high-ranking civil servants respectively. This study set out initially to survey students from more GCC member states and a larger and more diversified sample of GCC civil servants, but a combination of time constraints, resource limitations and bureaucratic barriers (see chapter concerned with methodology) restricted the study to Kuwaiti and Qatari students, and to a specific category of GCC officials. These limitations notwithstanding, the results and insights obtained in this work have broader relevance to the rest of the GCC states.

### **1.6 Outline of Thesis Structure:**

The thesis falls into twelve chapters. The first chapter is a general introduction to the overall thesis and is designed to acquaint the reader with the purpose, objectives,



significance and layout of the study as well as to introduce the issues and questions addressed in later chapters. Chapters two and three both focus on the theoretical framework of the study but from different angles. Chapter Two discusses the concept of federalism and assesses the applicability of some approaches to federalism to the GCC case. It also examines the types of extant federations and the various elements of these federations as well as the type of integration attested in the case of the GCC. Chapter Three examines Yemen and the United Arab Emirates as representative cases of federalism and political integration in the Arabian Peninsula. It focuses on the nature and mechanisms of both cases of integration and seeks, through exploring the obstacles facing either or both, to highlight the potential economic and political challenges that the GCC might face. Chapter Four provides, by way of a broad context for the study, a general background on GCC member states and looks at the historical, cultural and social affinities and ties which bind these nations. The first section of this chapter is a brief demographic overview of the GCC member states; the second section looks at the GCC against a model of federalism developed by Tarlton (1965); the third section discusses the organisational structure of the GCC, and the final and fourth section discusses the literature's evaluation of the objectives and achievements of the GCC. Chapter Five considers the role and status of the GCC as an economic and political regional grouping in both the old and new world orders and in the Gulf region both before and after 1990 and discusses the role of the new world order on to the emergence of the GCC. This chapter focuses on the role of both old and new world orders in Gulf politics and on the impact of the transformation that world politics has witnessed as a consequence of the end of the Cold War on the rise of the GCC. Focus will be laid, in particular, on how the struggle between major international powers for political leverage in the Gulf area has shaped the politics of the GCC states and opened the way for the emergence of a regional alliance between these states.

Chapter Six examines the political fragmentation in the Gulf through the role of the notions of tribalism and nationalism in the creation of the GCC. In this chapter such questions as whether these two phenomena have created the conditions conducive for the GCC states to pursue integration, or not, are discussed. The nature of tribalism and tribal affinities within and across GCC societies is a relatively unexpected aspect

influencing the GCC as a supra-national organisation, as is why the ideology of Pan-Arabism, consequential in so many of the Arab states, has had but a slight impact on Gulf society.

Chapter Seven outlines the research methodology utilised in this research project. It discusses the methods of data collection, the types of sample, and problems confronted during the fieldwork. Chapter Eight, beginning the analysis of the data proper, focuses on GCC political elite's attitudes on the GCC. The aim is to shed light on whatever differences there might be between this category of Gulf society and Gulf citizens, specifically on the perceived progress the GCC has made so far, the perceived degree of success it has had in adopting and implementing cooperative policies and the perceived gravity of the obstacles and problems that continue limit the effectiveness of the GCC. Citizen (student) attitudes on and perceptions of the various aspects of GCC are the concern of chapters nine, ten, eleven and twelve. Chapter Nine explores levels of knowledge about and interest in the GCC among students. Based on this, an attempt will be made to establish the linkages there are between the GCC as a political institution and its member states' citizens, what kind of importance it is accorded by the Gulf citizens, how responsive the GCC is to their concerns and demands and the level of transparency with which it proceeds in adopting and implementing policies. Chapter Ten is concerned with issues of social rapport and identity and explores, in particular, the level of social ties and cultural affinities, degree of interaction and nature of loyalty among the GCC students. By examining the cultural ties and social affinities that bind the societies of the GCC, the chapter aims to explore what underlies the strong sense of "solidarity" and "unity" characteristic of these societies and which is widely acknowledged in the literature, and what accounts for some of so-called social and cultural "integrative factors" in the emergence of the GCC. Student perceptions of the various factors leading to the creation of the GCC, the political machinery of this institution and the problems with which it is faced are explored in chapter Eleven, whereas chapter Twelve is devoted to an investigation of student's perceptions of the GCC cooperation policies. Besides establishing whether there are any similarities and/or differences between this group of sample and the political elite focused on in earlier chapter and discussing the implications of any congruence (or its absence) between the views of the two samples, the aim in



these two chapters is to determine how much progress the GCC is perceived as having attained within Gulf societies. What problems are perceived to form a stumbling block in its pursuit of greater cooperation among its member states and how much satisfaction or dissatisfaction with its institutions and policies there is among Gulf citizens. The thesis concludes with a recapitulation of the main findings of the study and a comparison of these with previous studies dealing with attitudinal patterns within the GCC society. It also outlines suggestions for future inquiry into attitudinal patterns and social perceptions in the Gulf region.

## **The Federalising Process in the Gulf: the Case of the GCC**

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### **2.1 Introduction:**

The conceptual term of federalism has been subject to virtually as many (different) interpretations and definitions as there have been scholars who have examined the concept, including in particular Riker (1964), Duchacek (1970), and Dikshit (1975, 1997a). Each has failed to agree on a single definition. However, the essential elements of the theoretical framework of federalism have been fully discussed by these scholars and others. This chapter will, in part, examine the broad theory of federalism with the aim of determining the most appropriate approach for interpreting and understanding the GCC structure and operation. It will also investigate the type of 'federal' integration involved in the case of the GCC and how federalism is of conceptual value to understanding this case of Arab regional integration. Though the GCC is not a federal state per se, our invocation of the theory of federalism in the context of the GCC, a regional organisation of 'inter-state cooperation', is not unsuitable, however. The various approaches to the concept of federalism are used not with a view to showing whether they fit or not with the case at hand, but, more fundamentally, with a view to illuminating what ties the GCC member states together, how this organisation came into existence, how it operates, and how far it has progressed in its moves to create an integrated union among its member states.

The theoretical discussion, therefore, will be divided into two parts, in line with the aims of this study. The discussion in the first part will examine the nature of federalism, with particular focus on the factors, whether internal, external, or a combination of both, leading towards integration (for a detailed discussion of the internal and external factors contributing, in one way or another, to the emergence of



the GCC, see chapters 9 and 11). The motivational characteristics underlying the process of territorial integration will be assessed to illustrate the applicability of the components of the different approaches in the context of existing federations. The second part will be concerned more specifically with the GCC regional integration model.

## **2.2 Definitions of, and Approaches to, Federalism & the Case of the GCC:**

A general understanding of the nature and origins of the ‘federal impulse’- the shift towards political integration - provides the background to the case of the GCC. Not all aspects of federalism will be discussed by any means, the attention focusing on those that are of potential relevance to the GCC, including the set of external and internal motivations and the obstacles facing this type of political organisation, particularly within a Third world context. How the federalising process contributed to the emergence of the GCC will help us draw conclusions as to the nature and problems of the GCC.

Political integration arising from federations or confederations have almost always been born mainly out of a voluntary effort of a number of distinct or independent regions, constituent provinces or states to merge into a single sovereign state with a federal central power, in which local and regional polities preserve their autonomy. However, cases of federalism and federations vary significantly; such federations as the USA, Canada, India and Australia, differ from each other in terms of extent and nature of federal and local decision-making power.

Definitions of federalism are diffuse; Smith (1995: 4) has asserted: “The term federalism has been subject to differing meanings and applied to many different situational contexts, and identifying its defining features can be as controversial as evaluating them.” Furthermore, what qualifies as a case of fully-fledged federalism is still a matter of debate among scholars; Forsyth (1981), for instance, has argued that

most scholars eschew answering the question of when a polity can be labelled as truly federal.

Five central components have been discussed in the literature in connection with the phenomenon of federalism.

### 1. Desire for unity:

The desire and need for some form of political integration (i.e. greater unity) constitute two important factors of federalism. The move towards such integration of voluntary expression among what are perceived in some (but not necessarily all) ways similar or different regions has been emphasised by many scholars, such as Dikshit (1975), Elazar (1979), Riker (1964), and many others. Dikshit (1997b: 269) has defined federalism as:

“A federation is born when a number of usually separate or politically autonomous units (or units with some pretensions to autonomy) mutually agree to merge together in order to create a states with a single sovereign central authority, but retaining for themselves powers of autonomous decision-making in matters that are predominantly of local and regional interests.”

The factors favouring federalism have been discussed by many scholars between which there is a measure of agreement as to what might be considered the essential components for the emergence of any federation. Focusing on the ‘classic federations’ of the US, Canada, Australia, and Switzerland, Wheare (1963) argued that there are five prerequisites for federation. The need for a common defence to allay or overcome fear of external and/or internal attack, especially in the case of ‘vulnerable’ territories is a common factor. Second, is the desire to be independent from some foreign power and the realisation that only through union could independence be achieved, (see also Dikshit (1975) for a similar argument). Geographical propinquity, the multi-ethnic nature of the societies and in some cases



the large size of their territories presuppose inter-state cooperation among the states for two reasons- to prevent any hostility that might erupt between either the regions themselves or between them and neighbouring countries and to protect smaller regions. Without union, these might face an insecure future, as smallness itself of a state makes it that much more vulnerable to external threat particularly within a geopolitically unstable area. Robinson (1961: 2) has emphasised the importance of the size of constituent regions in creating federal entities or states: “[...] countries of large areas and small [size] population, or even rather large population concentrated in widely scattered areas, are obviously suitable for this [federal union] form of government.” Both Riker (1964) and Dikshit (1975) agree with this framework though the latter adds the element of military insecurity to highlight and ground this point.

The notion of ‘unity’ itself has a number of prerequisites. Dikshit (1975) specifies several factors for unity, emphasising the sense of ‘common military insecurity’ and the need for a ‘common defence’ as the most important of these factors. He also specifies similarities of ‘race’, language, and culture (including religion) are major factors for unity (see also Mill (1947) and Riker (1964)). The third factor pointed out by Dikshit relates to the interdependence of the economies of separate units to which there was expectation for greater economic benefits would accrue from union. The final point noted by Dikshit was the similarities of political institutions as one of the factors with a role to play in inducing and promoting a federal order. Other scholars have argued that the last two factors are not very important or not as important as the other factors in the origins of federalism.

Federations are, thus, meant to achieve benefits- the absence of such perceived benefits undermines the basis of federation. The literature (see Huglin (1987), Dikshit (1975), and Elazar (1979)) differentiates between federalism in the Western world and in the developing countries. In some Third world countries federation attempts failed because some regions did not benefit from the federation bond, and some of them became poorer than the others in certain contexts. For example, one of the main reasons that the United Arab Republic (UAR) federation collapsed was the imbalance

of benefits between Egypt and Syria. The 'poorer' territories, it was considered, would gain most from the union, the burden falling on the richest territories. The political elite (government) in Syria perceived that Egypt, the centre of authority of the federation, gained politically, socially, and economically more than did Syria. The imbalance of power distribution between the regions could affect the unity and ultimately lead to secession, as was the case in the West Indies, for instance.

The classification of association or union types and motivation factors of integration have been widely discussed in the literature. Duchacek (1970) distinguishes between voluntary and forced unions and considers factors like the territorial size of the region, and external and internal pressures as instrumental to the emergence of cases of voluntary integration.

Basic to the process of federalising is the aspiration for greater political cooperation. Gagnon (1993) singled out such aspiration as the most important motivating factor for any federal order. Thus, he argues the choice of any society to enter the 'political arrangements' freely and willingly as one of the important federalism theory constituents.

Summarising so far, federalising process are linked to:

1. The need for a greater common sense of security and a permanent solution to external and internal threats and to counter geographical instability. Such instability influences the political, social, and economic life of the state and its citizenry. The latter's perception, therefore, will heighten the demand for security, increasing the pressure for unity or greater political cooperation. As noted in Riker (1964), Birch (1966), Livingston (1968), Paddison (1983), Dikshit (1971; 1997a), among many others, the external threat is one of the motivating factors for federal existence.
2. Similarity of political and economic institutions are a contributory political factor to any federal grouping. In the context of supra-state integrations, this factor could assume the same importance as that attributed to the common need for security. For example, the Gulf states are broadly similar in their political systems and political institutions. The similarities of the economies of the GCC member states, each



dependent on oil production, creates common ground for political cooperation among the members. Also, the existence of common social institutions across national boundaries of the GCC member states (e.g. royal monarchies and a society organised along tribal lines) can be a positive motivating element for inter-state cooperation. Cultural similarities too (e.g. race, language, religion) can be a major component for unity. Equally, the importance of geographical propinquity is important not only in the case of federal but also in any regional order.

The desire for greater political cooperation between GCC states is apparent and can be clearly detected in, among other things, local media interviews with the Gulf political elite. Moves towards unity among the Arabian Gulf states have been understood in the literature to have been induced, primarily, by fear of threats to the internal stability and external security of these states. For example, Twinam (1987: 29) has pointed out the importance of security, along with other reasons, as a motivating factor for the GCC's existence, and argued that one of the main goals for establishing this organisation were, on the one hand, to create a more secure strategic environment for the GCC members and, on the other, meet the GCC citizens desire for political and economic unity. As countries of small territorial size and small populations (Saudi Arabia being the exception), the security and sovereignty of the GCC member states have been frequently under threat from the two hostile regional powers of Iran and Iraq.

Contributing to the process of regional integration among the GCC member states, cooperation among them has been facilitated by the fact that they are closely linked by the elements of a single historical Arab *Umma*, including an Arabo-Muslim culture (i.e. common Arabic language, cultural heritage, and ethnicity), a common religion (the majority being Sunnis), and similar attitudes towards the Arabo-Israeli conflict. These similarities have strengthened the link between the GCC member states.

It is often the case that the aspiration for integration or greater political cooperation amongst the political elites of otherwise distinct states, provinces or

regions is paralleled by the preferences of the citizens. It is equally often the case that a cooperative federation is created or an economic union is established only after the citizens of the constituent units of such a union have been consulted as to the form and type of they would like to see emerge. But while it is true that the Gulf political elite's strong desire for establishing some form of union wherein economic, social, military and political cooperation would be pursued among the member states mirrored a similar desire for such a union amongst the dominant majority of Gulf citizens, none of the GCC governments consulted its citizens for their opinions regarding the formula of inter-state cooperation among the member states of this regional organisation. The exclusion of the citizens from the decision-making processes leading to the creation of the GCC could be attributed to the political elites' fear that any attempt to involve the citizens in such processes would perhaps open the gate for demands for more political rights and more participation in the political life of the area.

A study undertaken in Kuwait University in 1984 investigating the Kuwaiti citizens' attitudes towards the cooperation existing between the GCC member states found that the citizens were satisfied with the principal idea of creating an organisation along the lines of the GCC and with the principles on which inter-state cooperation among the member states of this organisation was based (see also al-Siyyasah (1984), al-Qabas, (1985)).

The need for inter-state cooperation had long been voiced by some Gulf intellectuals and academics. Al-Khateeb (1974), al-Nafeesi (1974), and el-Ebraheem (1974), for instance, have all argued that the Gulf states should seek some form of cooperation to avert being dominated by foreign major powers. The desire for some form of union has thus existed and has been expressed by the educational elites well before the GCC came into existence.



## 2. Federalism as a Constitutional Bargain:

Riker (1964) pointed out that at the core of federalism is a bargain struck between the central/national leaders and the local elites of the constituent governments bringing together the aggregating territory through constitutional representation. He listed two points as favourable factors in the origin of federation. The inclination for geographical expansion, arises where the political elites of the constituent regions, who might be under external or diplomatic threat and are prepared to negotiate a federal bargain. Entering the new arrangements is a means of avoiding military and diplomatic aggression. Only through concessions can the political elites of the constituent units face these challenges and, through federal arrangements as part of the main federal bargain process, secure their 'internal front'. Military threats can also be accepted as a causative factor for any federal principle. The question of self-insufficiency against external threat is a motivating factor in the establishment of federal entity. Arising from the self-insufficiency joining a federal order means, the political elite accept the bargain that in return for giving up some military independence, they would become party of a stronger military or diplomatic power as well as a larger and probably stronger polity. Among others, Sawyer (1969), Livingston (1956), and Davis (1978) have criticised Riker's hypothesis that the two conditions are the most important factors for the origin of federalism. Dikshit (1975) insisted on the changing importance of the military factor, accepting it as no longer beneficial in the rise of modern federalism. He argued that the main objective was to create a body politic - integrated and fully functional political units - as a new approach. He described post-1960 federations as a new type of modern federations. Birch (1968), the sole author to have attempted a partial test of Riker's thesis in his study of the Malaysian and Nigerian federations, was sceptical about the elements that have been raised in Riker's study.

The GCC member states have come under continuing threat both before and in the aftermath of the eruption of the Iran/Iraq war. The need for greater security arrangements was keenly felt and pursued by the political elites, and supported by the

West. However, according to many intellectuals (such as al-Kuwari (1992)), the political elite were not ready to concede some of their powers to overcome the sovereignty issue. Though, the GCC charter calls upon the member countries to pursue greater cooperation in domestic and foreign policies, one cannot easily talk about an element of bargain in the context of this regional union as each member state not only retains the right to determine its own domestic and foreign policies, but equally, the local implementation of the organisation's policies and statutes remains at the discretion of the member states.

### 3. Economic Resources:

Dissimilarities in economic resources between the units can be a source of both advantage and disadvantage to the federation process. Robinson (1961: 1) characterised federalism as “the most geographically expressive of all political systems.” Federations are based on the existence of regional differences and on the recognition of the claims and rights of the component areas to perpetuate their individual character. Miller (1956:138) also elaborates on this point thus: “The vital point of a federal system is the sense of locality, the belief that the area in which one lives is different from other areas, even though contiguity with them may provide many interests in common.” Discussing the question of differences in economic resources in the context of federal orders, Taylor (1990) argued that such differences can be reduced only once federation arrangements have taken root, and that regional variations would decline only following the installation of a federal system.

The issues of economic size and/or diversity have frequently been raised in relation to federalism (Riker, 1964; Paddison, 1983). Unifying economic resources differences are accepted by many scholars (e.g. Dikshit, 1975) as the most appropriate constitutional arrangement to bridge the economic and social differences between distinct geographical regions and foster a more socially and economically balanced union. Taylor (1993) argued that federalism had been associated with the larger countries such as the USSR, Canada, India and the US. The latter, for instance, owes its economic strength to its constituent regions bringing to bear their geographical



diversities within a single sovereign federation. Robinson (1961) claimed in his study of Australian federalism that the Australian case is geographically significant for a number of reasons. First, the contiguity of the large areas contributed to tie the scattered regions together in one type of union. Second, the states have acquired a sufficiently distinctive character or 'personality' within the federation for them to be treated as distinct or different geographical units, (see also, Paddison (1983) for similar argument).

According to Taylor, the economic strength and, by implication, the success of a federation experiment, could originate in a number of constituent regions or states bringing to bear their geographical economic diversities within a single sovereign federation. On this account, diversities in economic resources and economic strength of the constituent units would constitute an asset rather than an obstacle in the continuity of a federation. Together, the Gulf states control some 40% of OPEC oil. However, despite their wealth, the GCC states are small countries, both in terms of territorial size as well as native population, and are to that extent are vulnerable militarily and of questionable viability. In addition, Qatar contains one of the biggest gas fields in the world (some 7,100,000 m<sup>3</sup>/ Cubic meter of gas reserve (5.1% of the total world reserves), (see *The Middle East and North Africa* 1997, p.845). This huge bulk of assets and economic diversities makes the Gulf states some of the wealthiest countries as well as vital economic markets in the world. Since the economic strength of constituent units and/or diversity in the economic resources of such constituent units are incentives for integration, the GCC would have to coordinate the political, social, and economic cooperation policies between its member states in order to achieve the various aims outlined in the organisation charter.

#### 4. Political Communities:

Advocates of this approach claim that the term 'federation' refers to a gathering of political communities under one constitution or in a 'league'. Hicks (1978) argued that historical relationships play a main role in the emergence of any federation, i.e., a political community or a union of states. She asserted that any

federal type of union depends on the strength of relationship among the constituent units of such a federal union. Importantly, Hicks linked the term of modern federalism with democracy, alleging that the first and most important way in which federations came into existence was by spontaneous agreement between neighbouring governments (note the usage of the term unity as an approach to federation), but this did not necessarily produce more than a 'confederation' in which the federating units agreed on a central body to which they sent delegates. Hicks described this latter sort of federation as a body politic with virtually no powers or financial autonomy, within which the decisions were not necessarily binding on the members. She also claims that a federal form of government may initially emerge under the recommendation of a retiring colonial power and later leads, given suitable circumstances, to a basic semi-spontaneous agreement for federal government. Though the federation created and imposed by imperial powers could benefit these foreign states, it might prove more fruitful for the federal region, as is, for instance, the case of India and Nigeria.

Political communities can assume different forms in different contexts. They can take, for instance, the form of unitary states in one territorial community, motivated by such reasons as strong affinities and/or where a central power has engineered unity through nation-statism. Frederick (1968) approaches federalism as a union of socially diverse groups representing different political communities in an overarching polity.

Duchacek (1970) proposed the concept of 'territorial community' as an aggregate of individuals and groups who share not only common experiences but values, fears and purposes, and argued that these individuals' and groups' awareness of the territorial dimensions of their collective interests and actions could be the basis for federalism. Accordingly, he differentiated between two types of association that existed as political communities. The first type is the voluntary confederation or alliance of states based on a decision reached by two or more independent territorial communities (usually nation-states) to express their awareness of independence and their cooperation to reach the stage of unity. The second type of association is



coerced integration, where the dominant region annexes a weaker region. The weaker region, under this scenario, is less likely to benefit from the association.

Duchacek also differentiated between three types of associations, viz., union, alliance, and organisation, which led to federalism. He argued that some alliances or confederations led to early federations. For example, the Swiss federal union began, following the signing of the treaty of Everlasting Alliance in 1291, as a defensive alliance and then developed into a federation in 1847. According to Duchacek, federalism could be evaluated against a yardstick based largely on the American case. The criteria for evaluation were divided into two main factors, what he termed factors of power integration and factors of power separation. Under the former category, he listed the following: exclusive control over foreign relations; immunity against secession in the nation-states; division of the independent spheres of authority and power between the central and regional governments in such a way that no conflict and/or overlap between the two should arise (see also Wheare (1965)); making the amendment of the federal constitution the prerogative of the parliament and dependent on approval of a certain number of MPs using a voting system adopted by the federation. Under 'factors of separation', he specifies the following criteria: indestructible identity and autonomy of regions; residual and significant powers for provinces should be enumerated with the rest of the powers being reserved by the central authority; Bi-cameralism and equal representation of equal states; two sets of courts to eradicate an overlapping dual federal-provincial judicial system; a supreme court; and a clear division of powers between the core and peripheral authorities.

The Duchacek approach to political communities was, however, later to come under criticism on account of being constructed on the basis of one single federal experiment, viz. the USA, and is therefore not necessarily consistent with many other existing federal and confederal situations.

The inclination for unity over the desire for regional autonomy among certain regions can create a unique federal phenomenon. Watt (1966) asserted that a federal system could only be adopted where the desire for union was significantly greater than

the desire for regional autonomy, and that if the two desires were approximately balanced, the federal political institutions could be aborted. The most essential motives for union, according to Watt, include the desire for political independence; the hope for economic advantage; the need for administrative efficiency; enhancement of the conduct of both diplomatic and military external relations; creation of a community with a compatible outlook, based on race, language, or culture; geographical factors (e.g. proximity, physical nature); the influence of history and historical links; similarities and differences in colonial and indigenous political and social institutions; the character of political leadership, and the existence (and influence) of other successful models of federal union. As a result, he called upon a theory of relative balance or approximate equilibrium to explain the process of federal parturition. In his discussion of the relation between desire for unity and desire for autonomy and the role of this relation in the emergence and continuity of federal orders, Davis (1978) also warned that an imbalance between the desire for unity and the desire for regional autonomy would not help foster a proper federal order. An imbalance in the relationship between the two forces has no doubt led to the collapse of some federal institutions as in, for instance, the break up of Pakistan.

Much of the literature concerned with the GCC and its development argues that the Gulf political elite's desire for some form of unity and inter-state cooperation played a fundamental role in the emergence of the GCC. The argument is that the close cultural, religious, historical, and linguistic links that tie the political communities (governments) in the Gulf states and their shared apprehensions and fears (e.g., the alarm caused by Iran/Iraq war, threats from Iran following the Iranian revolution) incited them to pursue the need and value of establishing some alliance ensuring each member state's sovereignty and protection.

## 5. Distribution of powers:

Federalism can assume either a centralised or a more decentralised forms. Decentralisation of power would, in theory, protect the small constituent regions of a federal state and allow them greater autonomy within the broad federal framework.



The policies pursued by a federation should be designed to enhance and consolidate the division of powers agreed by the constituencies or member units of such a federation.

The distribution of power varies between federal or other types of union and mirrors the level of integration involved in such an order. Elazar (1979) noted that political integration is the *raison d'être* of federalism and that the federal idea rests upon the production of appropriate political and social institutions. He argues that relationships are best established through convenient pacts or other contractual arrangements and that humans are capable of making constitutional choices. Federal governments, according to him, thus fall into two types. In its decentralized form the structure involves a 'pyramid of governments' and the existence of a strong central authority. India and Pakistan are good examples of this type of federation. Second, is a non-centralized government in which power is so diffused that it cannot be legitimately centralized without the break up of the constitution. This type is deemed by Elazar as the 'more acceptable' of the two types and is best exemplified by such federal orders as the United States, Switzerland, and Canada. Elazar identifies six ambiguities in relation to federalism, most notably, that there are several varieties of political (arrangements) to which the term federal has been properly applied, and that federalism is directed at the achievement and maintenance of both unity and diversity, that it involves both a political and social-cultural phenomenon, and that it concerns both means (such as political unification, democracy, popular self-government, the accommodation of diversity) and ends (federalism for the authority is not a tool for achieving other goals but embodies the goals themselves as well as the means for their attainment or realization). (see Elazar (1979: 16ff) for a more detailed discussion of these and other related points).

In his discussion of the nature of federalism, Duchacek (1970) noted the centrality of the division of powers to the federal mechanism, arguing that "By a federal system we mean a constitutional division of power between one general government (that is to have authority over the entire national territory) and a series of sub-national governments (that individually have their own independent authority over

their own territories, whose sum total represents almost the whole national territory.” (188-231).

The division of powers approach is difficult to apply or reconcile with some of the Third world federal cases owing to, among other things, the nature and enormity of obstacles facing them. Besides the absence of a culture of political democracy and lack of diversity of economic resources, Third World governments face such intractable internal problems as lack of competence in political, social and economic management as well as external threat.

There is a need for further study of federalism theory before an agreed definition for the concept of federalism is likely to emerge. Agnew (1995: pp: 299-300) has suggested a number of tendencies in the current form and processes of federalism around the world. He argues that there is no universal form of federalism, that the drawing of regional boundaries intrinsic to federalism tends to rectify and reproduce the group differences to which federalism is itself a response (e.g., former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia), and that there is no necessary relationship between the growth of identity politics based on ethnicity or locality and the emergence of federalism.

In its essence, the GCC charter did not seek, at least in the short term, any division of powers among the constituent members, focusing instead on the necessity of harmonising policies in social, economic, and political domains. The GCC governments, described by most of the scholars (see, for instance, al-Kuwari (1992)) as highly centralized authorities, were firmly against the notion of conceding or relinquishing any of their powers.

### **2.3 GCC as a Regional Organisation:**

The phenomenon of regionalism has been interpreted in much of the literature as an outcome of the post-Cold War, tying up thereby the phenomenon of regionalism



and regional bonds to the new world order. Some scholars have discussed the new role of regionalism in world politics. Fawcett (1995) examined the historical background to regionalism and identified the origins of the new regional cooperation alliances or unions to the end of the cold war, the economic changes witnessed by the modern era, the end of third world worldism and to the process of democratization.

As pointed out by many scholars (e.g. Hurrell (1995)), regionalism is an ambiguous term. Factors of geographical proximity and contiguity shape and define the essence of regionalism and account for the level of cohesiveness within any regional grouping or order. Most literature attributes cohesiveness to one or more of such factors as (i) social solidarity rooted in racial, linguistic, religious, cultural and historical ties, (ii) economic solidarity and how powerful the organisation is in matters of, among others, trade, export and import industry, and (iii) political solidarity as manifested in the political system of governance, political ideology, and political representation.

The development of regional organisations in the Arab world dates back to the 1960s (see chapter 3 (section 2) discussion of earlier experiment in federalism within the Arabs world). Hurrell (1995) describes GCC as a regional alliance created in early 1980s and bringing together a number of Gulf states in pursuit of wider regional cooperation. Braibanti (1987) cited the similarities in political systems and cultural values existing among the GCC member states as one of the factors that led to the establishment of this regional organisation of inter-state cooperation.

Discussing the nature and type of inter-state cooperation pursued by the member states within the framework of the GCC as a regional cooperation union, Bishara, ex-Secretary General of this organisation, insisted that “the Gulf Cooperation consists of six independent countries, each of which preserves its sovereignty, internal laws, and distinctive identity. Coordination and cooperation [among them, however,] is to achieve unity [policies and objectives] between them. (1988: 9) ... I called for a confederate formula, where every member state can preserve its characteristics and distinctive identity within a security, economic,

political, ideological, and strategic framework, and I think that the general articles of the GCC charter substantiate that... (1992: 66)".

Most of the literature dealing with the GCC has highlighted the importance of cultural and political similarities among the member states as a supportive factors. Christie (1987) noted, that a common language, similar cultures and political systems are the most distinctive features that distinguish the GCC from other (regional) organisations (i.e. Maghribi Cooperation Council, known as UMA, Arab Cooperation Council, known as ACC). In his study of the emergence of the GCC as a regional organisation, Ramazani (1988) pointed out that Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, attributed the establishment of the GCC to a number of reasons, including, a common faith, similarities of political regimes, unity of heritage, similar social characteristics, and the desire to deepen and develop cooperation and coordination among the Gulf states in all fields (see also Angell (1987) and Braibanti (1987)). Noting the similarities in social and legal systems among the GCC member states, Angell (1987) drew attention to the important fact that sharia (Islamic law) has been and continues to remain at the core of the legal system of all countries of the GCC.

The GCC's existence has been explained in some of the literature as rooted in security needs. The creation of the GCC has also been understood as motivated by not only by security considerations but economic factors as well. Nakhleh (1986) discussed the reasons underlying the establishment of the GCC, its policies, problems and prospects and ascribed the creation of this regional organisation to the pervading commonalties among the constituent states on almost all fronts, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Tripp (1995) described the GCC as one of the most successful forms of regional grouping in the Arab world and attributed the existence of this new regional Arab organisation to the need for economic cooperation among states in close geographical proximity to each others. In her discussion of the nature and type of the GCC integration experiment, al-Mubarak (1991), an Arab political analyst and academic, argued that a proper confederation is far from becoming a reality in the context of the GCC countries. She did not, however, rule out the possibility of a confederation emerging among the GCC member states, but insisted



that this would only happen if the GCC member states were to pursue more extensive cooperation and coordination in all policy fields and show more commitment and discipline in the implementation of the organisation's resolutions and policies.

According to al-Mubarak (1991), al-Saleh (1992), an ex-Vice-Secretary General for GCC Political Affairs, and many other leading GCC analysts and figures, the GCC had managed to achieve some of the objectives it had set out to fulfil. One of the points of the research here is an evaluation of the GCC's attempt to pursue an integrated political and economic union among its member states.

#### **2.4 Overview:**

Clearly, the usage of federalism theory in this study does not mean that the GCC is a federal entity on a par with, say, the USA, Canada or India. In our examination of what type of 'federal' integration the GCC is and how the various components of federalism are manifested in the case of this Arab alliance, recourse has been made to the theory of federalism. Though the GCC is a Third World case of confederal integration, rather than a federal state per se, on a par with, say, the Swiss or American federation, and though the GCC exhibits none or little of the democratic traditions and practices of western federations, using the broad model of federalism for the purpose of evaluating the 'inter-state cooperation' achieved between the GCC states provides potentially useful insights. In particular the process of federalisation is of value to understanding the complex of factors which brought and continue to tie the GCC member states together, how this organisation operates and, most importantly, how far this Gulf regional organisation has moved in its drive towards meaningful inter-state cooperation.

With the exception of al-Ahmad (1993), the notion of federalism remains up to date entirely unexplored in the context of both the Arab Gulf and the Arab world. This paucity simply reflects the relative absence of federal or confederal cases in both regions, the sole exceptions being the UAE and Yemen. These are discussed in the following chapter.

## **Federation and Unification in the Arab World**

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### **3.1 Introduction:**

**H**aving examined the broad meanings ascribed to federalism, its nature and origins, it is useful to look at the practice of federalism and political integration in the Arab world with a view to determining how the theory of federalism applies in the context of these Arab integration experiments. This chapter will discuss, in particular, two cases of federalism in the Arab world, namely, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) federation and Yemeni unification. The significance of these instances of Arab integration derives from the fact that they are thus far the only two relatively long-established political integration experiments in the Arab world, where previous attempts at political integration in the Arab world have been aborted.

The first part will introduce the history of political integration in the Arab context. The UAE federation as well as the historical background and the political institutions underlying this experiment in federalism will be explored in the second part. The third part will investigate the Yemeni unification.

### **3.2 History of Political Integration in the Arab World:**

Attempts at Arab integration attempts go back to the 1950s, with the creation in 1958 of the United Arab Republic (known as UAR and also as the United Arab States (UAS)), a loose confederation bringing together Egypt, Syria and Yemen. This first experiment in federalism within the Arab world was, however, short-lived; in 1961, less than 3 years after its creation, it ceased to exist. The collapse of the UAR was due to unbridgeable differences between the political leaderships of the member



countries, on the one hand, and a power struggle for political hegemony within the confederation, on the other hand. Though the regimes of the three countries of the federation all adhered to the ideology of Pan-Arabism (see section 3.2.2), substantial differences soon emerged between them as Egypt sought to establish its supremacy within the federation and its partners in this federation manoeuvred to resist its moves. The bond between Yemen and the United Arab Republic was a *modus vivende*, rather than a constitution bond. Yemen's Imam Ahmad became increasingly threatened by Nasser's growing reputation within Yemeni society as a national hero and by the continuous activities and existence of the socialist movement of Free Yemenis in Egypt.

Attempts at Arab integration have been far and between. One undoubted reason for lack of such attempts is the differences that obtain between the various political systems in the Arab world and, consequently, the political agendas pursued by these various regimes as well as their modes of governance. For Drysdale & Blacke (1985), colonial powers and the legacy of colonialism also bear a responsibility for the lack of integration in the Arab world. They assert that the political institutions and structures inherited by Arab countries from these past powers are sometimes so different that it would require both a major reason (e.g. threat) a colossal effort and a great deal of political will to bring about integration.

### 3.2.1 United Arab Emirates:

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), a federation of the seven emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Fujarah, Sharejah, Ajman, Ras al Khaymah, and Umm al Quwaina, represents an interesting example among Arab federations. The unique status of the UAE stems from the fact that the federation is grounded in strong political, economic, and social similarities. In the words of Elazar (1987: 246), "[t]he one successful federal experiment in the Arab world to date, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is based on similar principles" (see Ben Dor (1979) for a similar argument). Elazar (1979, 1987) also attributes the success of the UAE federation to the type of power-

sharing and power distribution exercised within this federation. But while Elazar (1979, 1987), Anthony (1972), Peterson (1988), Ben-Dor (1979), and Taryam (1987), among other scholars, have characterised the UAE federal experiment as a successful attempt at unification, others, like al-'Atal (1979), have rejected such an experiment as no more than an alliance of political elites.

An evaluation of the UAE federation structure requires an understanding of the set of circumstances and factors which contributed to the emergence of such a federation and the institutions and power structures involved. An assessment of the UAE federation and the complex of political, social, and economic similarities binding the various emirates making up the federation will help throw important light on its institutional structure(s). Equally, and in view of the substantial similarities between the UAE and the GCC cases, an appraisal of the UAE federative structure and institutions will enable us to determine if the UAE experiment holds any insightful lessons for the GCC.

### **The Basis of Federation:**

The similarities among the Gulf sheikhdoms provided the rival rulers in the Trucial states with the incentive to merge in the aftermath of the British withdrawal from these former protectorates. Even before the proclamation of British withdrawal, Abu Dhabi was the most enthusiastic of the sheikhdoms for some form of federation. The federation materialised in 1971 after extensive consultative negotiations between the Gulf states, in general, and the sheikhdoms, in particular. The most significant reasons which motivated the creation of the UAE federation were:

Internal Pressures: Similarities between the political systems of the Trucial sheikhdoms highlighted the importance and advantages of unification of the nine Gulf states of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai, Fujarah, Ajman, Umm al Quwain, Ras al Khaymah, Qatar, Sharjah. Bahrain and Qatar, however, decided to opt out of the 'great merger' and maintain their own political status on account of their dissatisfaction with the distribution of authority within the new proposed federation. Both Qatar and Bahrain were fearful of the prospect of a federation dominated by the



two sheikhdoms of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. According to Zahlan (1989), besides feeling apprehensive of the possibility that its weak economy would be totally overwhelmed by the stronger economies of its partners, Bahrain felt both aggrieved and threatened by the political role that the federation was willing to grant to Qatar. Abu Dhabi and Dubai sought to formulate a federal constitution which would lead to the creation of a strong sovereign state. As Riker (1964) has argued, a federation is essentially a bargain, where the constituent units would be willing to merge only when the centripetal forces (the desire for unity) overwhelms the separatist ones, and where the constituent units see greater advantage in unity than in separation.

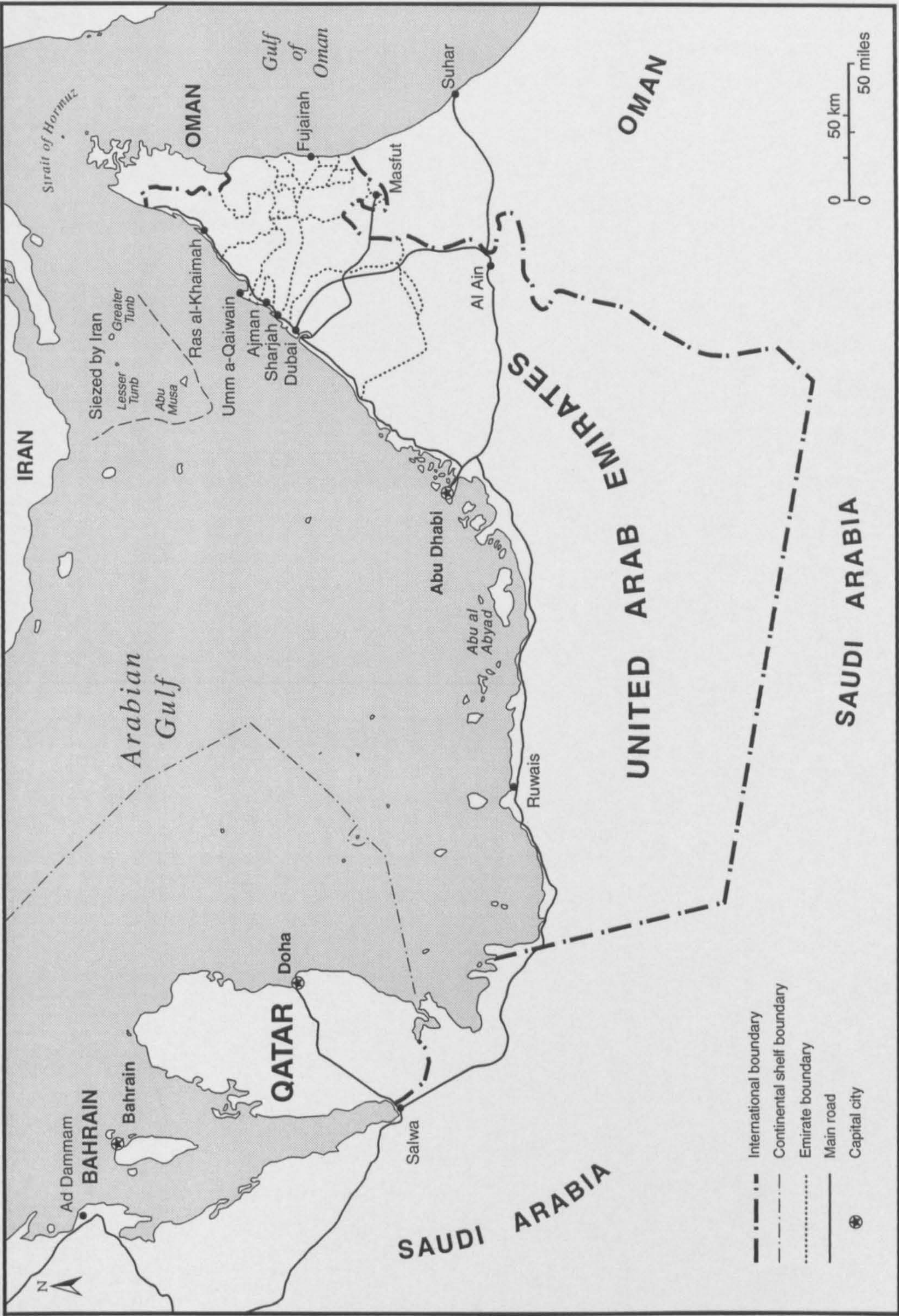
Al-'Atal (1979) has argued that the constitution was a type of bargain struck among the rival rulers without any consultation of the citizens and with total disregard for their opinions and views. From al-'Atal's point of view, then, the citizens were excluded from the consultation process leading to the creation of the federation and were, to that extent, denied an inalienable and integral democratic right. This lack of consultation of citizens on the part of the sheikhs was neither unexpected nor atypical; it was both the (inevitable) result and the reflection of an "elitist, paternalistic system of political authority" (Peck 1986). Thus, the federation was a political bargain struck among and agreed on only by the political elites of the constituent members of the new federation.

Realising that separate small sheikhdoms meant vulnerability to outside threats, the political elites of some small Gulf countries saw merger through federation as of clear benefit. The rulers of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Fujarah, Ajamn, Sharjah, and Umm al Quwain saw that their survival depended on unity and the creation of a greater federation. Thus, Sheikh Zayed, ruler of Abu Dhabi, and sheikh Rashed, ruler of Dubai, took the initiative and approached the rulers of the other sheikhdoms with a view to creating a federation bringing together the Trucial states. The role of British sovereignty in creating, prior to their withdrawal on December 2, 1971, a consultative council of the sheikhdoms helped in launching and establishing some sort of cooperation between the rival rulers of the Trucial states (Anthony 1972). Also, the policy of political rapprochement (political reconciliation) initiated by

the British government led to a sort of affinity among the sheikhs which facilitated the birth of the federation. However, political dissension among the emirates about the type of federation that they would like to see emerge and the veto privilege conferred on the wealthiest sheikhdoms of Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the Supreme council could have jeopardised the federation project.

“The relevant question concerning the federation’s [...] [short]-term political prospect[s] have to do with the pace of federal development, continuing disagreement over the desirable degree of integration, remaining privileges and prerogatives of the individual emirates, and the opening up of an elitist, paternalistic system of political authority”, (Peck 1986:120).





Map (3.1): The United Arab Emirates



The economic conditions of the constituent states of the UAE affected, and was reflected in, the political status of the states within the federation, with the two economically powerful emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai emerging as the dominant political states. Peterson (1988) and others have asserted that the smaller and poorer emirates, such as Ajman, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, and Umm al-Qaiwain, were dominated by the two rich emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Tribal patterns and affinities in the UAE were an important impetus to the emergence of the federation. The rulers originated from different tribes; the Abu Dhabi ruling family were from the al-Nahyan tribe, the Dubai ruling family from al-Maktum tribe, the Ras al-Khaymah ruling family from al-Qawsim as well as Sharjah, etc. (Peterson 1988). Tribal inter-relationships encouraged federation between the sheikhdoms. The rival tribes sought cooperation or unification in order to face the challenges of a new world and bring to an end their territorial disputes. Border disputes and conflict triggered by such disputes had in fact predated the independence of the Trucial states. Al-Hussari (1986) asserts that the new federal arrangements did away with borders between the member states of the new UAE federation and with them all the conflicts and tensions that they caused in pre-federation days.

In addition to the internal considerations and factors motivating the emergence of the UAE federation, there were other factors which played an equally significant role in inducing the creation of this federation.

The UAE federation consists of seven emirates (or sheikhdoms), viz. Abu Dhabi, the capital of the federation, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al Khaimah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm al-Qaiwain. With an area of approximately 77700 km<sup>2</sup> (30000 miles<sup>2</sup>), the federation had a total population in 1991 estimated at 1909000, of which UAE nationals (800,000) account for 38.4% of the total population (see also Table (4.5) for other Gulf states population). Between 1990 and 1992, UAE GNP was in the region of \$22,020 per head/ 000). However, the UAE, much like the rest of the GCC states, has been affected by the cost of the second Gulf war (see table (3.2)). The budget deficits that the UAE has been showing since 1990 have been caused by the



post-Gulf war rush on the part of all GCC states to acquire more armaments with a view to countering future regional aggression.

Table 3.1 The UAE Federation by Geographical Size:

Emirate	Size (km <sup>2</sup> )	☆Population (000)	Destiny (km <sup>2</sup> )
Abu Dhabi	67350	798	11.8
Dubai	3900	501	128.5
Ajman	250	76	304
Fujairah	1150	63	54.8
Ras al Khaimah	1700	130	76.5
Sharjah	2600	314	120.8
Umm al-Qaiwain	750	27	36
Total	77700	1909	24.6

☆ 1995 census

Source: The Middle East and north Africa 1995, P.966.

Table 3.2 The UAE General Budget for Various Years:

Year	Budget	
	Revenue	Expenditure
1990	15251	14394
1991	14621	15220
1992	16717	15538
1993	15900	17630
1994	16200	17610
1995	16900	17950
1996	17400	18250

£1 sterling = 5.668 UAE Dirham (Dh) (31 May 1996)

Source: IMF, Government Finance Statistic Yearbook; The Middle East & North Africa, 1995, P. 968, and 1997, P.1047.

Thus, as is clear from the geographical indicators provided in the above table, some of the sheikhdoms are small in size. Ajman, for instance, is only about 250 km<sup>2</sup>. As independent political entities within a very unstable and highly volatile region, these small-sized sheikhdoms would be vulnerable to threats from neighbouring countries.

Several factors help explain the creation of the UAE federation. For elites the political benefits following from greater political stability and resulting from integration were a major advantage. These benefits were unequal, however, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, as the major oil producing sheikhdoms among the emirates (accounting for 70% and 30% of the UAE total oil production in 1987 respectively



(Peterson 1988)) dominated the federation as in their right of vetoing powers in the Supreme Federal Council. The small size of the UAE (as in the GCC states in general) was also a motivation for the various sheikhdoms to federate, in an attempt to reduce the demographic imbalance created by immigration from such Arab and/or Muslim countries as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine, India, Pakistan, and Iran. Immigrants from these countries had come in search of jobs in the oil sector during and after the British occupation. The Gulf states became more and more dependent on foreign labour as demands for it continued to arise. However, the new federal and the sheikhdom governments did nothing by way of curbing immigration, considerably jeopardising the national identity of the Gulf states.

The common cultural markers of the various sheikhdoms was a further motivation for the establishment of the UAE federation. The shared Islamic faith played an important role in preserving close relationships among the UAE sheikhs and led them to create a unified sovereign state with a constitution founded on Islamic Law (*Shari'ah*). The constitutions of most of GCC states, including the UAE, are based on and grounded in the principles of Islam. The various emirates also share a common language- Arabic- and Arabo-Islamic heritage. Equally importantly, most of the UAE population hail ethnically from one or more of a small set of Arab tribes. These considerations of language, heritage and race were most effective in urging the UAE federation to come into being.

While the UAE and the Gulf states were less affected than other Arab countries by the movement of Arab nationalism, generally known as Pan-Arabism, the common language factor was a significant impetus behind the federation experiments in this part of the Arab world (Ben-Dor 1979). But while the Arabic language is the common language of the UAE population and the official language of the UAE state, the steady growth of immigration transformed the demographic and linguistic landscape of the country.



**Factors Inducing the Establishment of the UAE Federation:****1. Role of the Arab Gulf States in the Federation Establishment:**

The Gulf states played a decisive role in the establishment of UAE. One aspect of this role was the positive role of diplomacy undertaken by some the Gulf states between the various Trucial sheikhdoms during the negotiations leading to the establishment of the UAE federation. Kuwait, for instance, was the main mediator between the nine sheikhdoms, before Bahrain and Qatar decided on a separate future. Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed, Kuwait's foreign minister, undertook several shuttle missions between the nine rulers of the federation. Though his mission to convince Bahrain and Qatar to join the federation admittedly failed, his shuttle diplomacy between the other states was successful. Writing of Sheikh Sabah's role, Heard-Bey (1982: 341-2) stated that:

“After Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed visited the Lower Gulf states, Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi and Sheikh Rashid of Dubai met in 18 February 1968 on the border between their two states and formally agreed to merge the two sheikhdoms in a union, conducting jointly foreign affairs, defence, security, and social services, and adopting a common immigration policy”.

Saudi Arabia was the other Gulf state that encouraged and promoted the merger and federation of the Trucial states. Saudi Arabia's King Faisal and the ruler of Abu Dhabi spared no effort in urging the rulers of the other sheikhdoms to join the federation after Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia had resolved their territorial disputes. The creation of the UAE federation put an end to the territorial disputes among the various UAE emirates, where in the case of these between Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and between Ras al Khaimah and Umm al Qaiwain and attributed such disputes to the question of oil and oil explorations (Walker (1994)).

According to some analysts (e.g. al-Hussari (1981) Heard-Bay (1982) and Taryam (1987)), the UAE federation emerged as a consequence of the pressure exerted on the Trucial states by events in neighbouring Arab Gulf countries as well as a consequence of the fear that the scattered sheikhdoms of the Trucial states could be annexed by powerful neighbours such as Iran. One concern of the sheikhdoms was the threat of radical insurgency. The sheikhs of the Trucial states were apprehensive of the possible spread of the guerrilla war raging at the time between the Omani government and the People's Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) which sought to establish a sovereign state in the Dhafar region. The fear of the civil war in Oman spreading to neighbouring states induced the rulers of the various sheikhdoms to speed up the process of federation.

## **2. Role of Regional Powers in the Emergence of UAE Federation:**

The Iranian threat was a decisive factor in inducing the establishment of the UAE federation. Iran possesses the demographic as well as the economic and military power to pose a major threat not only to the UAE but other neighbouring Gulf countries as well.

Iran's dominance of the Gulf area and its status as the major power in the region, presented a major threat for the small Gulf states. The British declaration of withdrawal from the Gulf states was immediately followed by the Shah of Iran's claim that Bahrain was part of the Persian Empire territories seized by the British. Such a claim threatened the sovereignty of the sheikhdoms and forced them to think seriously about establishing a federation that would place them in a better position to protect their shared interests and sovereignty from potential Iranian external aggression. Taryam (1987) argues that Iran also urged the poorer emirates to reject the control of the federal government and linked its subsidies to these emirates to their rejection of federal control.



### 3. Role of the Superpower:

The emergence of the United States' and the Soviet Union's influence in the Middle East and Gulf regions - the Pan-Arabist movement, for instance, incorporated many of the principles of the socialist ideology (see also below) - had an enormous effect on the political organisation of the sheikhdoms. Peck (1986) argued that the emergence of the United States had the same effect as the People's Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf's (PFLOAG) threat.

Following the British declaration of their intention to withdraw from the Gulf, the United States began reacting against the USSR's increasing penetration of the Gulf area by increasing its influence in the region. The USSR's close relationship with Iraq and the USA penetration in the rest of the Gulf states and the power struggle that ensued between the two superpowers as they manoeuvred for influence presented direct threat to the sovereignty and stability of the various small Trucial states. The establishment of the federation, thus, came as a reaction against the encroaching economic and political influence of the two superpowers as they fought for hegemony in the Gulf region (see chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of how the struggle between the USSR and the USA for political influence in the Middle East influenced the emergence of the GCC).

#### **Federal Mechanisms: The Operation of the Federal UAE**

The UAE has been deemed by many scholars and political observers as a positive experiment in federalism. Peterson (1988) praising the survival of the UAE federation experiment, wrote that "All other attempts at Arab unity have been dismal failures. The UAE experiment differs from most of these in that it has been a real attempt at unification, rather than simply an empty political statement." (P.198). A knowledge of the structures developed to operationalise federalism in the UAE would be instructive.

The UAE federation consists of three main bodies:

**1. Supreme Federal Council (SFC):** The SFC is the top legislative body in the UAE federation. The head of state and the vice-president are elected by and from among the members of this council. The SFC drew up the federal constitution and has the function of formulating the different policies of the UAE. Each of the seven constituent emirates is represented by its ruler in the SFC (see the Emirates Centre for Strategic and Research Home Page). Each ruler in this federal institution has a single vote, with decisions being passed on approval of at least five sheikhs. The SFC is the highest policy-making body in the UAE federation. However, Abu Dhabi and Dubai have the right of vetoing and therefore blocking any policy or decision they deem unsuitable to their interests. The SFC president, who is also head of the state, enjoys enormous influence within this council and, though theoretically shared and subject to approval of the SFC, his powers within this body remain extensive. He has the right of convening the SFC and presiding over its sessions as well as representing the state (Peterson 1988). In June 18th, 1996, the SFC re-endorsed the permanent constitution and the Federal National Council.

The SFC has the right to ratify and decree the federal law of the state and international treaties. It also has to approve the budget of the federal state. The SFC meets in session four times a year and in emergency situations should the need arise.

**2. Council of Ministers:** The Council of Ministers initiate laws and submit them to the SFC for authorisation. The Council of Ministers is described by the constitution and the 'legislative power' within the federation. The ministers are appointed by the prime minister, subject to approval of the SFC. Also, the SFC president, that is, the head of state, appoints the senior government officials, diplomats (e.g., ambassadors) and other government representatives. The Council of Ministers consists of sixteen ministers and six state ministers. Cabinet members are chosen from the different emirates, but, usually, the important portfolios are reserved for ministers from the dominant emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The prime minister must be chosen from either Abu Dhabi or Dubai. The Cabinet discusses also the federal budget and refers any decisions to the SFC for approval. The tasks of the Council of Ministers, as detailed in Article 60 of the constitution, include supervising the implementation of



federal laws, decrees, regulations, Supreme council decisions, international treaties, and other agreements.

**3. Federal National Council (FNC):** Nominally, the FNC is a consultative body though some scholars (al-Musfer (1985), Peterson (1988), Taryam, (1987)) consider it as a legislative authority. As in the other GCC countries (except Kuwait) there is a lack of elective institutions in the UAE. All of the GCC States have consultative councils, i.e. Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia. In the UAE the FNC is a consultative body only, which involves forty representatives, with the number of representatives chosen from each emirate depending on the economic influence that the emirate has within the whole federation. Article 67 of the constitution identified the number of representatives from each emirate as:

**Table 3.3 The Number of Seats Allocated to Each Emirate:**

Emirate	Number of Seats
Abu Dhabi	8
Dubai	8
*Ras al Khaimah	6
Sharjah	6
Ajman	4
Fujairah	4
Umm al Qaiwain	4
Total	40

\* Ras al-Khaimah joined the federation after its initial establishment.

The FNC is in session for a period of not less than six months (see Article 78) and, unlike the SFC sessions, the FNC sessions are open to the public (Article 86). However, there has not been much public interest in attending the sessions of this institutional body.

The absence of suitable representation in the various federal councils remains one of the major problems confronting the UAE federation. Heard-Bey (1982: p. 377), identified the roots of the problem thus: “Here too, the constitution is appropriate to the requirements of the new federation, because the nature of the tribal societies in each of the seven Emirates and the earlier absence of formal education limited the choice of suitable representatives to the small number of leading families.”



The FNC is described as consultative body that has no real power. As in the other GCC states, consultative bodies are advisory and have no ability to devise policy or to amend the constitution without the agreement of the political elites.

**4. Higher Federal Court:** The principal function of the Higher Federal Court (HFC) is the adjudication of disputes between individual emirates, on the one hand, and between any of the various emirates and the federal government, on the other. Another function of the HFC is the determination of the constitutionality of federal or state laws, the resolution of jurisdictional disputes between federal emirates or between the courts of two or more emirates, and adjudication of crimes against the state, such as those affecting its security.

The competences of the HFC were exclusively defined in Article (99) of the federal constitution. The president of UAE federation, in consultation with the SFC, appoints the head and the other five members of the HFC. The Supreme Court and the other courts are generally independent from government authority and therefore free of any government influence or pressure.

#### **Evaluation of the UAE Federation (and Its Relevance to the GCC):**

Attitudes towards the UAE federation experiment have been divided. Supporters (e.g. Taryam, (1987)) of the federation have argued that it constitutes a positive instance of an Arab “sub-alliance” and, to that extent, embodies a concrete (if local) step towards Arab unity. For Ben-Dor (1979: 201), the UAE “is undoubtedly the most successful (indeed the only reasonably successful) federal experiment in the Arab world thus so far”. Heard-Bey (1982) argued that one of the factors that helped make the UAE federation by far the most successful Arab experiment in federation is that neither the rulers nor the citizens were affected in any significant way by the radical ideological movements that appeared and sometimes took root either in the Gulf or elsewhere the Arab world.



A different view is expressed by Anthony (1972). Assessing the federation just six months after its establishment, he praised the UAE federation as an experiment while recognising that it faced a number of problems. First, there were threats confronting the new federation from Iran particularly in the latter's occupation of the three UAE islands of Abu Mousa, Big Tunab and Small Tunab. Second, political dissidence in the emirates and the threat of radical opposition groups, and, the traditional tribal and dynastic rivalries, which remain strong in the UAE, posed a constant threat of political fragmentation. Peterson (1988) too was critical of three aspects of the UAE federation. He criticised the institutions of the federation, especially its leadership and the make-up of the government, pointing out that the posts of the president and vice-president as well as the most important ministerial portfolios are the preserve of the dominant emirates within the federation, that is, Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Also, he argued that the federal constitution of the state failed to address political pluralism and liberalism. While supportive of the establishment of the UAE and its achievements, particularly in the sector of essential services (public transportation, education, health care, ...etc.), Taryam (1987) drew attention to some major problems confronting the UAE federation, most notably the Iranian threat as well as the border disputes which continue to jeopardise the stability and survival of the federation.

The UAE federation has also been criticised for the fact that the country's constitution was drawn by the rulers of the member emirates and, as such, reflects these rulers' concerns and interests rather than those of the citizen (al-Musfer (1985), Taryam (1987)). While evaluating the UAE as a relative success in Arab federalism, al-Musfer (1985) was critical of some aspects of the institutions put in place to operationalise the federation and, in particular, the almost total centralisation of power within this federation. One might argue, in this respect, that, to the extent that power on all levels has been concentrated in the hands of the central government, the UAE would best be characterised as being a form of quasi-federation.

Some of the problems facing the GCC are similar in several respects to those facing the UAE. Both the UAE federation and the GCC face the same problem of



external threats from such neighbouring Gulf states as Iraq and Iran. However, there are significant differences between the two cases. While zealous protectionism and an unwillingness to compromise in pursuit of wider inter-state cooperation remains one of the intractable problems hindering the GCC's progress, the federal arrangements in the case of the UAE have solved the difficult issue of sovereignty and with it the related problems of protectionism. Similarly, while the problem of border disputes continues to undermine cooperation between the GCC states, all the border disputes and the conflicts and tensions resulting from these disputes have ceased to exist between the various emirates with the creation of the UAE federation.

In general, though the UAE federation still faces some obstacles, this experiment has been a qualified success. Besides helping settle border disputes and the sovereignty issue, the federal system has benefited the UAE immensely, in that it helped transform a number of economically and militarily vulnerable and traditionally small sheikhdoms into a modern sovereign state, with a rapidly developing social and industrial infrastructure. To the extent that the UAE federation undoubtedly embodies a significant step towards overcoming ideological divisions and building a long-lasting Arab 'sub-alliance', the GCC and its member states might stand to benefit enormously from this Arab experiment in federalism in their efforts to establish a more cohesive union.

### **3.2.2 Yemen Unification:**

The unification of the North and South of Yemen took place in 1994. Attempts at unification of Yemen have a long historical pedigree, predating even the Ottoman era. On a number of these occasion attempts were pursued through coercive means. There are several reasons for studying previous Yemeni unifications in the context of this study. First of all, besides the close geographical proximity of Yemen to the Gulf states, Yemeni society is, much as is the case within the rest of the Gulf society, rooted in and organised around tribes. While the dominant social structure remains tribal in both Yemen and the Gulf states, political power too is closely inter-related to the power and influence of the various tribes. The Yemeni experiment



throws further light on the reasons underlying the process of unification as well as the reactions of what is fundamentally a homogenous society to the unification process.

Prior to the unification of the two countries in 1994, capitalist North Yemen and Marxist South Yemen were locked into a power struggle to gain power and control over one Yemen, fuelled by conflicting ideologies.

### **Historical Attempts at Unification in the Yemen:**

There have been several attempts to unify the Yemen.

#### **1. Confederation of the North Yemen Imam:**

Abdul Nasser's 1955 coup d'état brought the monarchical system in Egypt to an end and sought to purge Egypt of feudalism. Nasser became a national hero in many Arab countries and the establishment of the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria in 1958 raised hopes of greater unity in a divided and weakened post-independence Arab world. North Yemen under the reign in 1958 of Imam Ahmad, the only Arab country to join the United Arab Republic confederation. The federation was conceived and promoted by Nasser as part of his effort to unify the Arab world under the banner of Pan-Arabism.

As part of the Jeddah Pact in the late 1950s, the Imam of Yemen, a Zaidi Shi'ite, signed a treaty of cooperation with the UAR, paving the way for the creation in March 1958 of a confederation between Yemen and United Arab Republic, which came to be known as the United Arab States. Partly because of the geographical distance separating the centre -i.e., Egypt- from the periphery -i.e., Syria and Yemen- and partly because of political and ideological differences, the 'United Arab States' never really progressed beyond a loose and fragile alliance of three Arab countries.

To Imam Ahmad joining the union was of value in that he could gain Nasser's support for his struggle with Britain over Aden and in neutralising the opposition movement of the Free Yemenis' based in Egypt. The confederation proved useful in saving Yemen's fragile system from the Arab leadership struggle which began to cause



concern for the conservative regimes of South Arabia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Iraq in 1958. While the West supported these conservative Arab the new confederation of the United Arab Republic and Yemen gained the acclamation of the Soviet bloc (Zabarah 1970). Ingrams (1963:105) argues, in connection with the unlikely alliance between the UAR and Yemen, that: "The alliance between the Imam and Nasser may seem curious to Westerners, but, though Nasserism and Zaidism were implacably hostile to each other in a purely Arab context, they were allies against Western colonialism".

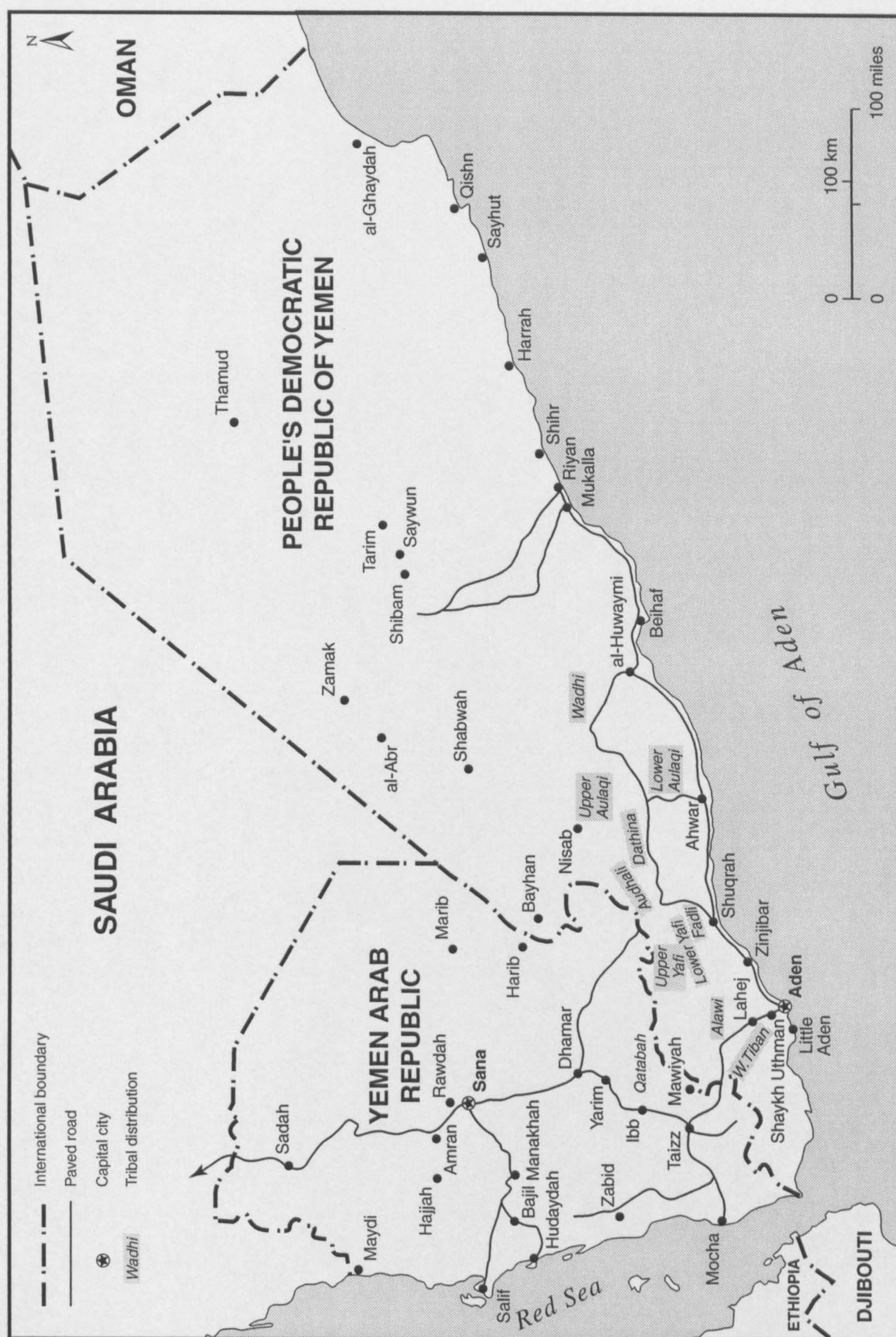
The relationship between the Imam and Nasser was later to become increasingly strained owing to their different ideologies and it was not long before these differences caused the alliance to come to an end. The collapse of the alliance started when rebellion spread among the army of Yemen in San'a and Ta'iz. With the country verging on a civil war, the Imam arrived in the country from France and immediately restored order.

The relationships between North Yemen and the United Arab Republic were not strong enough to maintain the confederation, while the Imam and Nasser's ideological differences were irreconcilable, ruling out the possibility of any real integration (see also Little (1968)). Also, though there was strong support for the confederation among the citizens (Zabarah (1970) of both nations, neither of the two countries had the political will for such a venture. Neither was willing to make the compromises necessary for an integration of two separate and ideologically different countries into one sovereign state.

## **2. South Arabian League Federation:**

The South Arabian League federation was established in the 1959 between several of the tribes of South Yemen in reaction to the emergence of the UAR federation. Marxist ideas were widely and most influential among these tribes in the 1960's. After the creation of the United Arab Republic, some of the south Arabian tribes then under the sovereignty of the British crown, expressed a desire to form a federation. The tribes in question were Bayhan, Awdali, Fadhli, Upper Awlaqi, Dali, and Lower Yafi sheikhdoms.





**Map (3.2): The two Yemens and the Tribes Forming Part of the South Arabian League Federation:**



The South Arabia tribes were opposed to any union with north Yemen as they saw the Imam's regime as reactionary and brutal and thus incompatible with their radical socialist doctrine. Though the UAR was a socialist regime, the south Arabia tribes were also unwilling to join Nasser's federation on account of ideological differences. There was increasing pressure on the British from the Aden Trade Union Congress and the nationalists, both supported by Nasser, to withdraw from the south Yemen. The new federation, an autonomous territory under British protection, came into being in February 1959, under the sponsorship of Sir William Luce, governor of the south Emirates protectorates. The federation treaty designated *al-Ittihad*, beyond the Aden border, as the capital of the new federation bringing together the sultanates of Lower Yafai, Awdhali and Fadhli, the Emirates of Bayhan and Dhali and the Upper Awlaqi sheikhdoms.

The constitution of the new federation established two Supreme Councils, an Executive Authority council and a Council of Ministers. The federation was represented by two councils; the Council of Six Ministers with executive authority, where each region was represented, and a Federal Council with legislative authority; to which six members from each state were appointed (see also Little (1968)). Within the federation, the Yemeni authorities were to coordinate domestic policies whereas Britain was to oversee foreign and defence policies as well as financial aid for social and economic development programmes. Britain was also to maintain the federal army and the National Guard to suppress any future rebellion within the new federation. The British maintained and preserved the fragile federation largely to counteract other new political developments in the Middle East and compensate for their loss of influence in the region. The establishment of the UAR federation, the increasing sympathy for Nasser's brand of Arab nationalism, the demise of the pro-west monarchy in Iraq, the civil war in Lebanon, and the Suez invasion fiasco of 1956 had all undercut British interests and influence in the region. Other reasons for Britain's maintenance of the new federation included the need for a buffer area offering protection to their base from internal and external threats as well as the



importance of Bab al-Mandeb at the southern entrance to the Red Sea, especially after the loss of the Suez Canal.

The federal constitution granted the British the right to run the Yemeni security and external policies, provoking hostile local reaction which gradually spread all over the Middle East. A discriminatory constitution, which withheld the franchise from the majority, led to a Yemeni opposition to and rejection of the status quo. The Aden Trade Union Congress (ATUC), opposed the federation and grew more antagonistic to the British presence in Yemen. Fuelled by Pan-Arabism's call for independence of all the Arab countries from colonial powers, as well as the unity of all Arab nations, the situation grew more and more volatile. Eventually, the Yemeni government joined opposition parties in calling for British withdrawal and the right of the Yemeni federation to build a new relation with the other sheikhdoms and tribes in Yemen.

With the worsening political situation, the legislative council of the federation petitioned the British government to amend the constitution. The British response came in January 1961 with the new governor of Aden, Sir Charles Johnston, who changed some of the articles of constitution, granting a wider role for the Yemeni authorities in the fields of foreign policy and defence. His proposed changes proved unsatisfactory to all Yemeni groups. The ATUC called for strikes in Aden and the federation eventually collapsed following the escape of the British governor to Ethiopia.

### **Contemporary Attempts at Unification in Yemen:**

The late 1960s witnessed further attempts at unification between North and South Yemen. The first talks started in 1968 when a delegation from Aden visited San'a'. The north Yemenis' dissatisfaction with the rapprochement initiated by Aden and the southerners' uncompromising socialism led to the suspension of the talks. Besides the deep differences of official political ideologies of the two countries, there were major differences in their foreign policies, especially with regard to the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. South Yemen had close relations with Iran and Syria, while North



Yemen was an ally of Iraq and had even sent soldiers to assist Iraq in its war against Iran.

In late May 1990, Yemen's history entered a new phase as North and South Yemen agreed that their future would be better served within a federation. The unification between the north and the south was the source of considerable support among the people of both Yemens, with the inauguration of the federation being celebrated with huge street parties in San'a' (MEED, 6 July 1990).

The new constitutional government moved quickly to integrate both former government administrations, establishing, as part of the new federal government, a cabinet council of twenty ministers representing both North and South Yemen and a new Presidential Council, responsible for electing the new president of unitary Yemen. The first president of unified Yemen was (and still is) Ali Abdullah Saleh, North Yemen's pre-union president and leader of the People's Congress Party, while the first vice-president was Ali Salem al-Bhaid, the former Socialist Party Chairman in South Yemen. The North Yemeni's domination of the government and the decision to locate both the capital and the government headquarters in North Yemen reflects of the latter's greater population.

Ali Abdullah Saleh's support for Iraq during the Gulf crisis of August 1990 earned Yemen isolation from most of the international community. In addition, almost one million Yemeni expatriates lost their jobs in the Gulf states as a result of Yemen's support of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The bulk of returning expatriate Yemenis put the Yemeni economy under much economic pressure, but the discovery of oil on the borders between the two former Yemens helped the new federation absorb this pressure.

### **Nature and Problems of Unification:**

One of the major obstacles that faced the unification of the Two Yemens was the considerable differences in their political institutions. While South Yemen was



equipped with 'modern' constitutional institutions, North Yemen's political culture depended largely on tribal and traditional relations and institutions. Besides the daunting task of bridging these differences, there were other difficulties. In North Yemen, two major tribes dominated the political culture of the country; the Hashed tribe (from which President Saleh and most of the government representatives came), and the Bakiel tribe. Conscious of their minority status in North Yemen, the Bakiel tribe, though in control of the territories where most of the oil wells were located, have felt that any union would exclude them from power sharing and, to that extent, were determined to oppose it. To avert a merger that would marginalise them from power, the Bakeil insisted on democratic institutions guaranteeing the rights of all sections of the Yemeni society.

One real obstacle for the unification was that most of Yemeni tribes, especially those of North Yemen, were heavily armed, creating a situation in which there was a possibility of the state's authority being challenged. Both old and emergent political parties within the new federation used legal and illegal means to dominate and defeat rival parties, sometimes resorting to such extreme measures as kidnapping and murder to achieve their political aims.

The two leaders of North and South Yemen made light of the challenge of integrating a former Pro-Soviet south with the capitalist north and it was not long before ideological conflicts and irreconcilable political positions led to the outbreak of a civil war between the south and the north in 1994. The North, owing to its military and economic superiority, managed eventually to defeat and tighten its grip on the South after expelling the country's socialist leadership.

### **3.3 Overview:**

Both the UAE and Yemen cases represent different expressions of federalism in the Arab world. The UAE was initiated between rival emirates and gradually developed into one of the most Arab and third world positive experiment in



federalism. Benefiting from a willingness by the political elites of each of the constituent states to pursue mutually beneficial cooperation within the context of a single federal sovereign state, the UAE oil wealth transformed the society and the political systems from an alliance of rival tribes to a stable and prosperous modern state.

The Yemeni federation originated between two countries, South Yemen, a socialist regime, and North Yemen, a capitalist state. Owing to these differences in political ideology, the federation did not survive for long and was soon to lapse into a civil war which was to eventually end in a victory for the north and in the latter imposing its political will on the south, and salvaging the federation. Nonneman (1997) points out that lack of economic resources is one of the most intractable problems facing the Yemeni federation and that the country should seek to attract foreign investments in order to build a viable economic future. He also notes that the most notable among the problems facing Yemen on the domestic front are issues of political reconciliation and consolidation of the federal institutions as well as amelioration of its foreign policy with neighbouring countries. Clearly, the Yemen's unification had and still faces both internal and external problems.



## **The GCC: A Preliminary Assessment of its Formation and Structure**

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### **4.1 Introduction:**

**T**his chapter aims to shed light on the social, economic, and political conditions of the GCC and its basic structure. The first part of the discussion is concerned with the circumstances in which the littoral Gulf states agreed to the formation of the GCC and the manner in which Arab states, Middle East countries, and major international powers reacted to the creation of this Gulf organisation. Making use of Tarlton's model of assessment, the second part evaluates how different are the GCC states. The discussion will conclude with an exploration of the organisational structure of the GCC, its charter and its achievements.

### **4.2 Assessing the GCC Formation:**

Moves towards political integration in the Gulf began mainly between the 1950s and the 1970s and materialised in the creation of the federation of the United Arab Emirates, which is considered, as has been discussed, by many as one of the more stable experiment in federalism in the Arab world.

The creation of the GCC was met with mixed reactions in the Arab states and the rest of the world. The Arab League welcomed the creation of the GCC and regarded such an organisation as a positive step towards Arab unity. According to Shuriedeh (1995), the reaction of the Arab league could not have been otherwise since the creation of the GCC was consistent with the League's founding principles, especially Article 9 which endorses all inter-regional cooperation and partnerships as long as they do not conflict with its charter, or undermine the interests of other



League member states. The importance of the creation of the GCC derives from the fact that it represented a first attempt at Arab political integration following such failed attempts at Arab unity as the United Arab Republic (UAR). The Arab League's support for this new Arab organisation was also a gesture aimed at reviving confidence in an Arab world still feeling weakened and demoralised by its defeat in the 1976 war with Israel. Support for the establishment of the GCC came also from Arab conservative regimes engaged in constructive partnerships or maintaining amicable diplomatic relations with the littoral Gulf states.

The ideological confrontation and rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union as they vied for supremacy in the Third World conditioned different reactions to the emergence of the GCC. The United States and the Western bloc conspicuously supported the emergence of this regional alliance. After the collapse of the Shah's regime in 1979, the capitalist bloc, and most particularly the United States, was very much in need of a new friendly alliance in the area to safeguard its interests against potential USSR threats. El-Ebraheem (1993) argues that the US policy in the Gulf has always been based upon, and guided by, the assumption that the Soviet Union (and its presence in the Gulf) represents a major threat to American interests in the area. The United States' support for the GCC was thus a vital part of its manoeuvres to protect its interests in the Gulf and counter any potential USSR threat in the region.

The GCC member states saw American support as of vital importance to the success of their efforts and for the stability of the whole Gulf region. Twinam (1986) argues that America had urged Gulf supra-state cooperation and strongly endorsed the idea of creating a regional alliance aimed at augmenting the security and political stability of the member states. For the US, an organisation grouping a number of US-allied, politically stable and economically prosperous Gulf states would be the best way to preserve and protect American interests in the region (Twinam, 1986).

On the other hand, and coming during the heady days of the cold war, the USSR's and the socialist bloc's response to the creation of the GCC was



fundamentally characterised by suspicion and disapproval. The Soviet Union saw the GCC as not only a pro-capitalist organization but an essentially American initiative designed to bring the oil rich Gulf countries under its influence (see el-Ebraheem (1993), Ramazani (1992), and Twinam (1986) for a detailed discussion of the Socialist bloc's reaction to the GCC during the cold war).

#### **4.3. The Rise of the GCC:**

The GCC, inaugurated in May 1981, consists of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as the six original and present-day member states. Most of the literature (see, among others, Nakhleh (1984); Ramazani (1992) notes the pervasive and substantial similarities which exist among these Gulf countries. These similarities are not confined to, say, language and religion but extend to economic resources, ethnicity and the nature of political systems; the GCC member states are all Muslim and Arabic-speaking countries, with native populations made up entirely or largely of Arabs, and with oil as the dominant economic resource. Peterson (1984) notes that owing to many fundamental similarities, the six member states of the GCC have as good, or better, a chance of making a success of their union than any (other) similar assembly of Third World countries.

The GCC was established during the early years of the Iran/Iraq war, and, according to many (see, for instance, Ommer (1993)) the war played a causative role in the creation of the Council. However, in any discussion of the various structural and causative factors that were instrumental in the emergence of the GCC, one should not ignore or underestimate the role of such factors as the Israeli attack on Iraqi nuclear facilities, and the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon had encouraging the formation of the Council.



### **A. Geographical Significance:**

The geographical location of the GCC across a strategic trade and communication route has been at the root of the long-running interest of international powers in this organisation and the Gulf region in general. Peterson (1988) and el-Ebraheem (1993) note that the importance of the Gulf states derives from their geographical location which makes them a link between the eastern and western parts of the world. The recent discovery of the huge reserves of oil had augmented the rivalry between major international superpowers and turned the Gulf into a focal place of ideological tension and confrontation between the major superpowers.

The geographical proximity of the GCC countries to such hostile states as Iran and Iraq and the increasing threat the small Gulf states increasingly faced from these two regional powers alerted the Gulf political establishment to the need for some form of union whereby they could collectively thwart any external threat to their internal security. Half of the GCC members are micro-states; Bahrain is a mere 240 square miles, with a population of just over half a million, Kuwait is 6,880 square miles, with a population of less than two millions, and Qatar is 4,247 square miles, with just over a million. The small population and territorial size made the sovereignty of these Gulf states precarious, with some of them forced to continually live in the shadow of outside aggression from hostile Gulf regimes. For these vulnerable states, joining a regional alliance with other friendly Gulf partners was considered a most effective arrangement in pursuit of permanent peace and political stability in the region.

### **B. Nature of the GCC:**

Though some (e.g. Tripp (1995)) regard the GCC as a model of integration in the Third world, most of the Gulf's political elite and analysts insist that the GCC experiment represents no more than a significant case of regional integration. According to the GCC Information and Research Department (1983: pp. 1-2), the GCC Charter lays down five fundamental principles defining the Council's general aims and objectives. First, the charter stresses the need for regional integration and



cooperation along the lines of the Arab League, with the ultimate aim of creating a free trade zone and free movement of capital and citizens. Second, it stresses the need for and importance of coordination of policies among member states in the fields of oil industry, the economy, technology, international relations and social welfare. Third, the charter opposes any foreign intervention, insisting that the security and stability of the Gulf should be the responsibility of Gulf states only, but does not rule out the possibility of soliciting the support of allied Arab countries and friendly non-Arab states when deemed necessary. Appeal to such an external support was evident during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Important Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria and Morocco supported the GCC member states and so did most of the Western bloc, including the US, UK, France, Germany, and Canada. Fourth, the GCC charter places much emphasis on the independent sovereignty of each of the member states of the organisation. Finally, the charter stresses that the GCC is an Arab and a Muslim Gulf institution. These charter points summarise the background and aims of the GCC and indicate that the organisation had committed itself to abide by the Arab League charter which encourages inter-state cooperation and enjoins non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. GCC neutrality vis-à-vis outside conflicts was fully evident during the Iran/Iraq war despite all the pressures that were exerted on member states to take sides during the conflict.

Most of the literature attributes the creation of this regional alliance to three main reasons. Security factors and security considerations have been proposed as the first category. Sandwick (1987) claims that the GCC should be viewed as a security-based alliance in the broadest sense insofar as it seeks to create a stable and peaceful strategic environment in the region through the cooperation among its member states. Al-'Esa (1981), Entessar (1988) and McNaugher (1984) all note that the GCC was created as a response to the escalation of the Iran/Iraq war and the regional threat that became increasingly more and more tangible in the wake of the Iranian/Iraqi military conflict. Many of those who identified security as a main reason for creating the GCC refer, in particular, to the strong fear amongst Gulf conservative monarchical regimes of the Shi'ite Iranian revolution. Ramazani (1981) argues that the Iran/Iraq war and the Iranian revolution combined to intensify the security concerns of the Gulf



monarchies and prompt their concerted effort at finding a collective solution to these concerns. Table (4.1) illustrates the military imbalance between the GCC member states and both Iran and Iraq.

Table 4.1 Military Balance of the GCC and Other Regional Powers (1992/93):

Country	Total Army	Total Air Craft	Navy Vessels
GCC	162000	457	150
Iran	680000	462	262
Iraq	382500	774	19

Source: Military Balance, 1992/93, London, 1993.

The 1990 Gulf crisis had a significant effect too on the politics and the economy of the Gulf states. Preoccupations with external threat and concerns for security precipitated a rush towards armament stockpiling in the region, with most of the GCC member states earmarking much of their budgets to military spending, (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 GCC Military Expenditures Compared to GNP:

Country	*Defence Budget in 1991 (b/\$)	Military Expenditure (as % of GNP) 1990-91	Average Annual Military Imports (US\$/ Millions) 1988-92
Bahrain	0.24	4.4	148
Kuwait	9.30	6.5	249
Oman	1.50	16.4	94
Qatar	0.935	12.5	57
Saudi Arabia	13.70	14.0	1.738
UAE	1.60	4.8	413

\*: Source: The Military Balance, 1992-93, 1992, pp. 105-25.

Source: Human Development Report, 1994, P.170.

Iran and the Iranian revolution were not, however, the only source of threat for the Gulf states; Iraq, USSR, South Yemen and the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon also either posed immediate threats or represented potential threats to the conservative regimes of the Gulf. Both Iran and South Yemen sought to destabilise the Gulf regimes and undermine the political stability of the GCC member states. Ramazani (1981) alleged that the Marxist regime in South Yemen sought to strike an alliance with the Iranian regime by destabilizing the situation in the GCC states through inflaming the Shi'ite minorities in these states. South Yemen strove to stimulate and bolster the socialist movements in the GCC states in an attempt to undercut the stability and security of the tiny Gulf states.



A second category of reasons for the creation of the GCC were a combination of political factors. A number of sources have pointed out that the desire to seek more cooperation among the politically similar, small, and more or less equally vulnerable Gulf states became increasingly stronger as a result of the external threats that began to emerge with the Iranian revolution and the First Gulf War. The Gulf regimes, it was proposed, were alarmed by the outbreak of the Iran/Iraq war and the eruption of the Iranian revolution and sought to avert any threat to their political stability through the establishment of a regional alliance of political similar regimes (see, e.g., al-Otaiby (1987)).

Some of the literature (see, for instance, al-Otaiby (1987); Nakhleh, (1984)) adds a third category of ‘driving forces’ behind the creation of the GCC. The relevant argument here is that, with the exception of Bahrain, the GCC brings together a number of major oil-producing and therefore wealthy Gulf states keen to safeguard their oil interests through coordinated policies and harmonise legislation, particularly that concerned with the industrial sector. Overall though, while economic and political reasons played an important role in the creation of the GCC, the rise of this regional alliance was primarily driven by considerations of security.

#### **4.4 Towards a Measurement / Assessment of the GCC:**

The study of federal and/or confederal entities and the various mechanism and institutions put in place to operationalise them has been attracted much attention from political scientists, and political analysts. Different scholars have put forward different models as viable theoretical frameworks for the study of federalism and confederalism.

This study will make use of Tarlton’s (1965) theoretical model of federalism to evaluate the degree of political, economic and social difference within the GCC. Tarlton’s theoretical approach to federalism differentiates between two types of



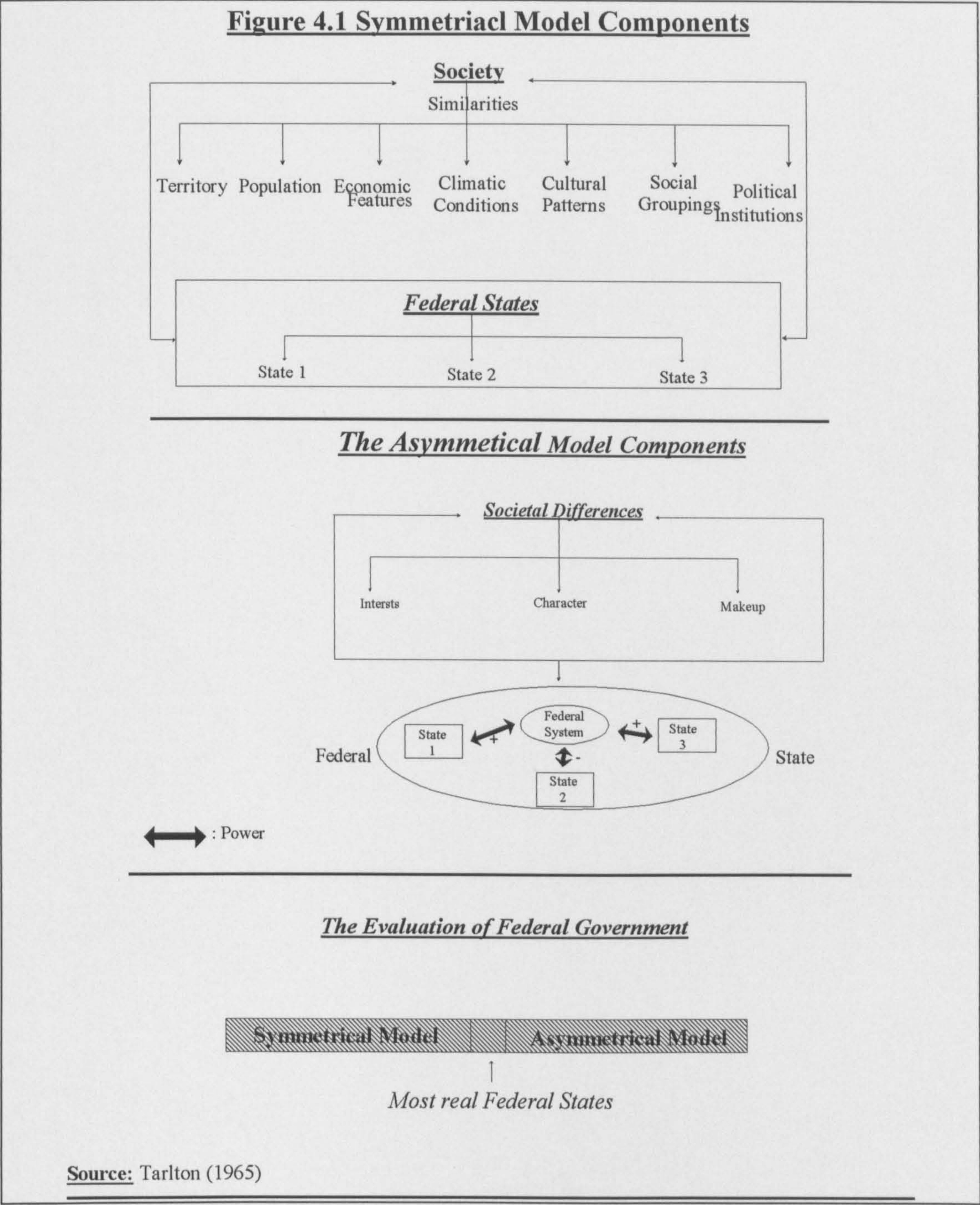
federal society: symmetrical and asymmetrical federal systems. He defined symmetrical systems as where the component states share common cultural, economic, social and political factors (see figure 4.1). Symmetry, hence, implies a level of conformity and commonality in the composition of each separate political unit of the system to both the system as a whole and to the other component states (Tarlton, 1965, p. 867). He characterises asymmetrical federal systems, on the other hand, as where the component states do not display similar cultural, economic, social or political factors. The central authority within asymmetrical cases of federalism depends on the diversities in the larger society and finds political expression through local government possessed of varying degrees of autonomy and powers (Tarlton, 1965, p. 867).

According to Tarlton's model, most real federal cases are located somewhere between the two extremes. He alleged that his scale can be related to the success or, alternatively, the failure of any case of federalism depending on the factors of the participating regions. In the case of symmetrical federal systems, there are factors which tend to unite states and help in their rapprochement to create federal institutions. Such factors could be territorial, demographical, social, economic and political similarities in the case of each state. Powers in the symmetrical case of federalism are equally distributed and thus such a federal system is similar to the confederation type.

In the asymmetrical case, most of the regions are differently represented in terms of power. In addition, there are factors which tend to undermine the federal bond and which could be represented differently in each unit. Such factors involve, among others, the interests of each state, the character of each state and the makeup of the whole society. Paddison (1983) argued that the more asymmetrical states threaten the federation's stability by their greater likelihood of vertical conflict with the authority of the federal government. The relationship between the federal system and the units and even between the units themselves are not equally represented in the asymmetrical case. As a result of that conflict, the type of bond between the centre and the region becomes loose, as in the case of Quebec in Canada. Figure (4.1) shows



Tarlton’s dichotomy between Symmetrical and Asymmetrical federal systems and the position of most present-day federations.

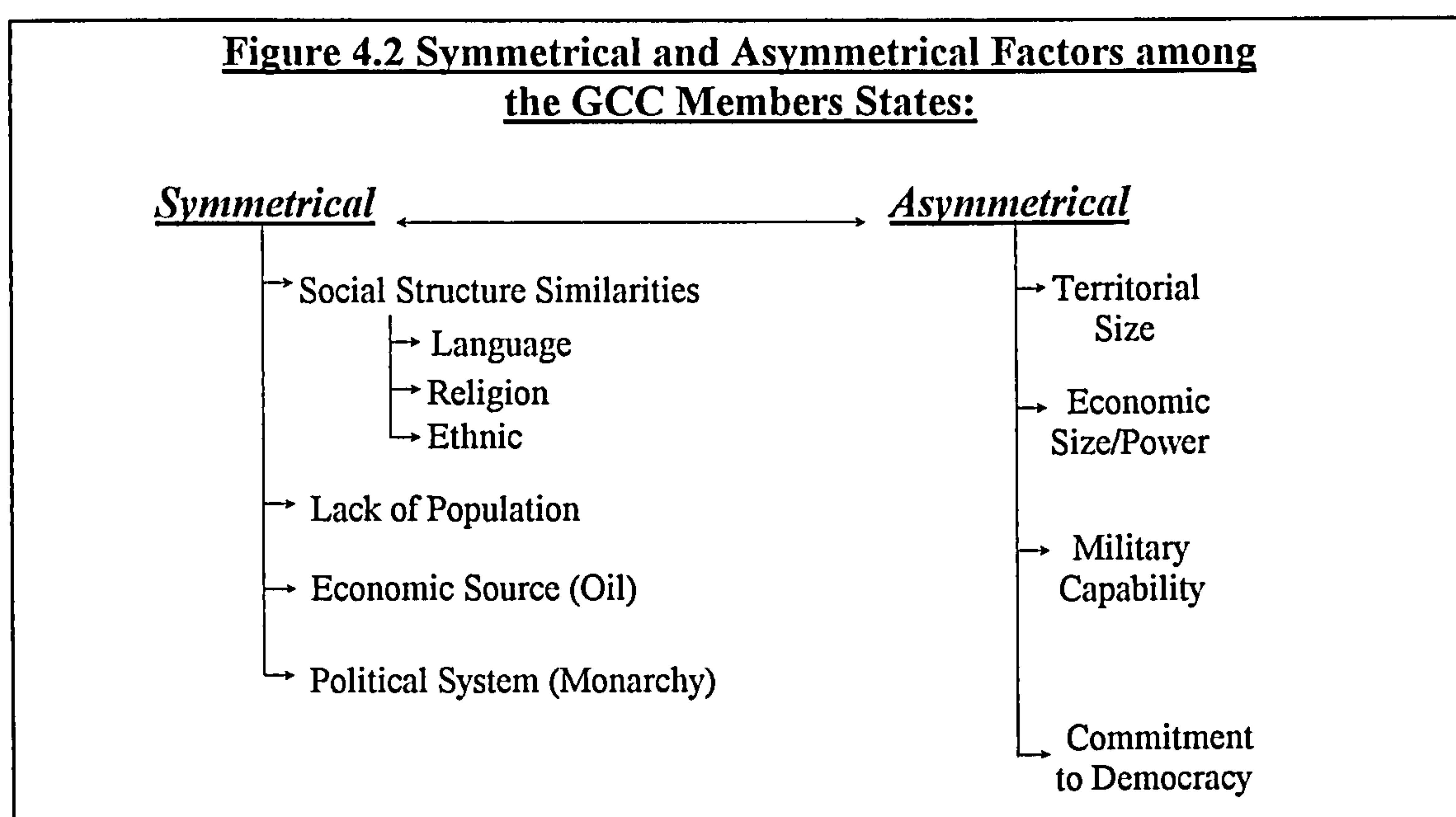


The element of symmetry in the GCC case can best be understood in terms of the various cultural, ethnic, religious, political, linguistic and economic factors which unite the member states of this organisation (see preceding paragraphs for a discussion of the common similarities between these Gulf states). The asymmetry results from the various factors which tend to divide the GCC member states.



Although Tarlton's scale is not relevant in its details to the GCC case, it can to a degree still prove useful in a discussion of the Council. One area in which Tarlton's scale can be useful is in assessing the degree of representation among the member states and illuminating the symmetrical or asymmetrical nature of the GCC phenomenon. An assessment using Tarlton's scale will reveal, among others, whether or not the GCC member states are equally represented in terms of power and influence within this organisation.

Figure (4.2) sums up both the various differential and compatible elements among the member states of the GCC.



Another model assessing the nature of federal systems is that of Kornberg et al. (1979), which was devised to assess the Canadian model. Kornberg et al. (1979) looked at Canadian separatism in light of David Easton's concept of citizen political support, using three variables affecting such support, viz. the collective cost and benefits of the Canadian federation, Quebec's power and the cost and benefits of federal arrangements to that province and other regions of Canada (Atlantic, Ontario, Prairies, British Columbia), and, finally, the government's responsibility for the current situation.



On the basis of a study sample of 2562 respondents, Kornberg et al. hypothesized several political factors affecting the Canadian case seen from the citizen's point of view. Of these factors, the most important include power distribution and the scale of such distribution; public support for the government; the cost and benefits of the federation from one province to another; power distribution and influence within the federation; economic, ethnic and linguistic compatibility and incompatibility among the constituent parts of the federation; and, finally, people's orientation towards politics.

The results of the Kornberg study affirmed that many people perceive their provinces as paying disproportionate costs without receiving commensurate benefits. Kornberg's study also found that the relationship between the central authority and the provinces depended on the strongest state, and that, to that extent, power had been unequally distributed among the states, a characteristic typically associated with asymmetrical federation types. It also found that compatibility of the economic, ethnic, and linguistic factors can support the unification process, while variety and incompatibility in economic, ethnic, and linguistic factors can hinder or preclude the integration process.

In any application of Tarlton's and Kornberg et al.'s models to the case of the GCC, some important points need to be made. First, and crucially, both models of assessment have been elaborated in the context of situations that are substantially different from that of the GCC. Tarlton's model was predicated on the basis of a federal state - namely, the USA- while Kornberg et al.'s model was developed on the basis of the Canadian federation. The GCC case, in contrast, is regional alliance, and not a single federal or confederal state. Second, the American and Canadian federations are prominent Western democracies whereas the GCC member states, clearly, are not democratic in this Western sense with the exception of Kuwait which saw in recent years the introduction of important measures aimed at improving its democratic basis, other member-states do not function as democracies. These differences do not, however, of necessity, preclude the possibility of using the Tarlton's or the Kornberg et al.'s arguments to evaluate the GCC experiment in



federalisation and, particularly, the degree of compatibility among the organization constituent members.

Kornberg's model of the operation of federal systems is based on a set of critical factors serving as evaluating criteria, most notably (i) the degree of political representation and influence of each constituent member state or region within the federation, (ii) public support for the government, (iii) the cost and benefits and variability thereof from one province or region to another, (iv) Economic, ethnic and linguistic uniformity or incompatibility, and (vi) degree of people's orientation toward politics in the regions.

As regards power distribution and political influence within the GCC, it is undeniable that Saudi Arabia - as the largest, most populated, and strongest, both economically and militarily, of the six member countries- is a most dominant political presence in the organisation. The political and economic influence of some member countries, as argued below, has been a source of much tension (and conflict) among the member states of the organisation (see section II). Of public support factor, it is difficult to see how this can be applied to the GCC owing to the simple fact that Gulf citizens have always been excluded from any direct or indirect participation in the GCC decision-making process: the GCC was created without any formal or informal consultation of the Gulf public and it continues to pursue and implement policies in total seclusion from the peoples of the member states.

Compatibility of economic, ethnic and linguistic factors is undoubtedly the most prominent aspect of the organisation and this compatibility of socio-economic and historico-linguistic factors is widely perceived to have played an indisputable role in the emergence of the GCC. Braibanti (1987: PP. 205-6) argued in this regard that "Geographical propinquity and commonality of interest are buttressed by the remarkable degree of cultural and religious homogeneity found in the six states. The depth of this homogeneity, shared by no other group of nations in the Islamic world of a billion adherents, justifies the use of the term "Arabians" as distinct from the term "Arabs".



### **I. Factors of Similarity:**

#### **A. Social Components:**

##### **1. Cultural Factors:**

Cultural identities are linked notably, but not exclusively, with language, religion, and ethnicity. Watts (1991) stressed the important role of language to the success of the federalist bond, noting how disparities in language have, for instance, prevented the smooth integration of Quebec, a French-speaking region, and the English-speaking rest of Canada. Clearly, no such differences exist in the Arab world: Arabic is the lingua franca for all of the GCC states.

A second dimension of culture is religion and religious affiliation. Islam lays at the very GCC's ideological foundation. Islam also constitutes the fulcrum of political activity in the GCC states and is likewise essential to the political legitimacy of the governmental systems. The tenets of Islam, especially the holy *Qoran* and *Sharia* (Islamic) law represent the formal basis of governance and the judicial system of each member state of the GCC. The Sunni regimes of the Gulf states felt threatened by the rise of the Shi'ite faith in Iran. In the wake of the Iranian revolution, the Shi'ite threat to the Gulf states from their minority Shi'ite populations, widely feared as having an unswerving loyalty to Iran, was perceived by the political classes as a major threat to the internal security and political stability of the Gulf states. Exacerbating the fear of the Shi'ite threat was the imbalance in the Shi'ite and Sunni populations in the neighbouring countries of Iran and Iraq where the Shi'ites account for a majority of the population. Table (4.3) demonstrates this numerical imbalance between the Sunnis and the Shi'ites in Iraq and Iran and among the Gulf states.



**Table 4.3 Estimation of the Moslem Population by Sect Type in the Gulf (%):**

Country	Sunni	Shi'ite
Bahrain	40	60
Kuwait	70	30
*Oman	40	60
Qatar	90	10
Saudi Arabia	85	15
UAE	84	16
Iran	5	93
Iraq	45	55

\*: In Oman: the Ibadi sect is an offshoot of the Shi'ite sect.

**Source:** 1. The Middle East and North Africa 1995 & 1997, 41st. & 43 editions.

2. Encyclopaedia of the Third World, 4 th. ed.,

Vol. 1 and 3, G. T. Kurian, 1992 (ed.).

A third component of culture is ethnicity. In the context of the GCC ethnicity relates to one dimensions which has been of instrumental significance in the creation of the GCC, viz. the tribal origins of Gulf citizens. The tribal origins of both Gulf monarchies and populations set the Gulf states off as a distinct group from the rest of the Arab world. Some of the Gulf tribes are spread over more than one Gulf state. The Bani Hajar tribe, for instance, is spread over areas of Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, while the Otaibah tribe is found in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

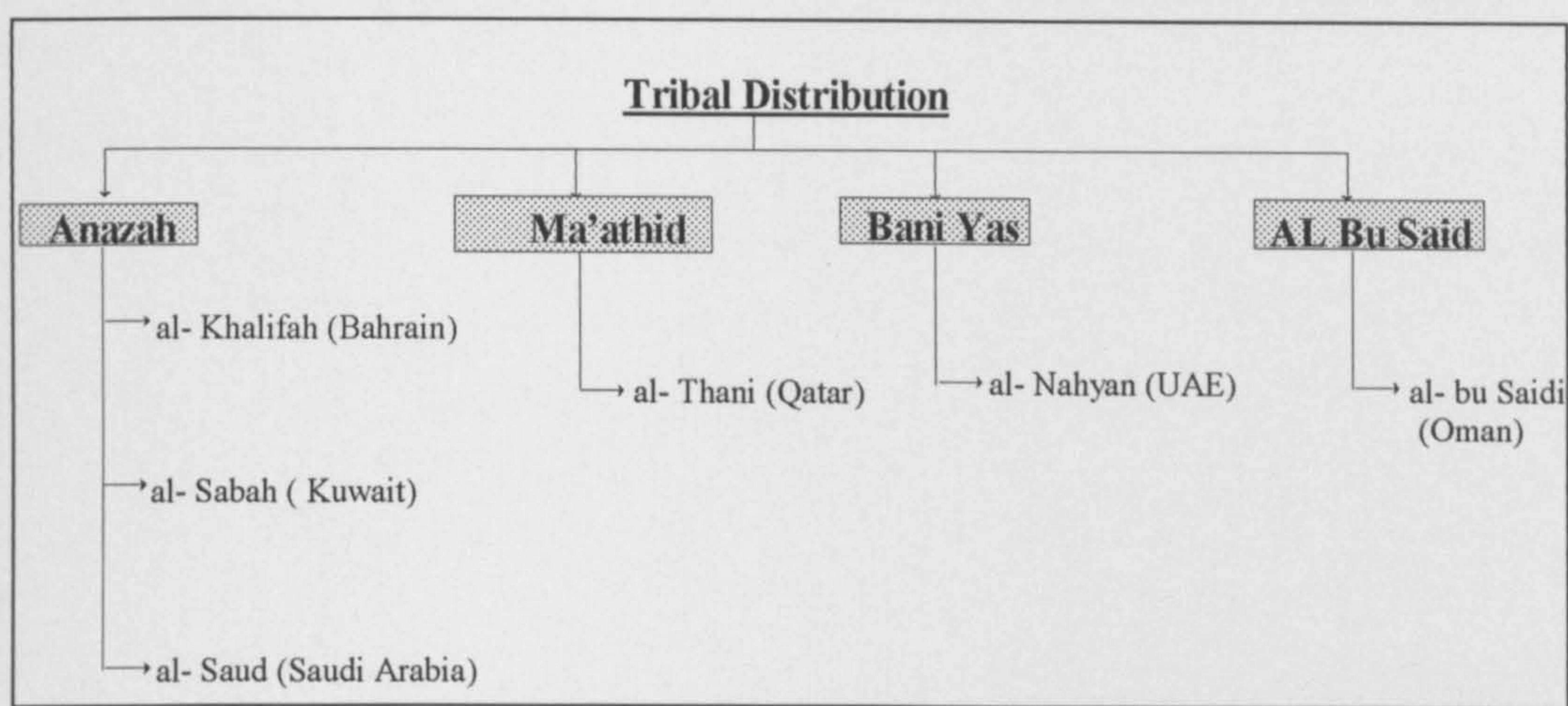
Old tribal relationships bound the royal families of the various Gulf states. Crystal (1995) differentiated between two political tribal forces on the west coast of the Gulf. First were the mobile, transient confederal tribes bound loosely to a tribal unit under the leadership of the political organisation of Rahama Ibn Jabir political organization, the ruler of the Qatar Peninsula. The second tribal entity involved al-Qawasim based in Ras al-Khaima Trucial Oman, and the Bani Yas tribe in Abu Dhabi. Sweet (1962) identified another tribal unit, the Utab tribe as a political entity who formed a protostate alliance along the Gulf rim in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar. Schofield (1991) asserted that in Kuwait the Utab settlers of the al-Sabah, al-Khalifah and al-Jalahimah clans originally survived only on Bani Khalid sufferance until they were strong enough to establish some trading autonomy and ensure their own political survival in 1752. In Qatar, al-Thani, with the help of the al-Murrah, Bani Hajar and al-Manasir tribes, fought the al-Khalifah tribe to ensure a measure of political autonomy (Williamson (1934)).



Al-Saquaf (1975) claimed that any form of union between the Gulf states would constitute a strong deterrent in the face of any external threat or interference owing to the deep relations between the people of the Gulf. Most of the GCC citizens hail from a few tribes spread over the geographical territory of the GCC, most of which spread across the state boundaries which were to be established during the colonial period.

The common ethnicity of both Gulf royal families and citizens, a social factor that gives the Gulf its special and distinctive character amongst Arab countries, consolidated the desire to create the GCC. Further a close affinity existed amongst some of the royal families of the GCC: the royal families of Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia all hail from the same Anazah tribe that occupied Najed in the north of the Arabian Peninsula and the al-Thani royal family, the rulers of Qatar, came from Howtat Bani Tamem in Najed (see figure (4.3) for more details). This ethnic affinity of Gulf royal families was also to play a notable role in the establishment of the GCC.

**Figure 4.3 The Tribal Roots for the Royal Families of the GCC Member States**



#### **B. Small Size of Indigenous Populations & the Size of the Foreign Workforce:**

Population size is a problem common to all Gulf states. Each of the GCC states has a small indigenous population and an increasingly larger expatriate community. The size of the foreign workforce in the GCC countries has reached such levels that in the case of some of these countries the ratio of the expatriate community to the native population is nearly 5 to 1. Al-Kuwari (1985) warned of the economic,



social and cultural implications of a small indigenous population and a continually expanding foreign workforce in the GCC states. Table (4.4) shows the GCC population for various years of the GCC member states and the dramatic shift since 1983 in the population of Kuwait between 1991 and 1992. The evident shift was the consequence of the deportation of Iraqi workers and those from countries allied to Iraq that the Kuwaiti government deported in the aftermath of the second Gulf war.

**Table 4.4 Population Estimates- GCC Member States: (Millions)**

Country	1983	1985	1988	1990	1991	1992	1993	1995
Bahrain	0.39	0.42	0.47	0.5	0.52	0.53	0.54	0.58
Kuwait	1.57	1.72	1.69	2.13	2.09	1.4	1.43	1.57
Oman	1.15	2	1.42	1.52	1.58	1.64	*2.017	2.13
Qatar	0.31	0.36	0.34	0.49	0.44	0.45	0.53	n.a.
Saudi Arabia	11.17	12.38	14.02	14.87	15.39	15.92	n.a.	18.25
UAE	1.21	1.35	1.5	1.59	1.63	1.67	*2.083	2.37

Notes: n.a.: Not Available

Source: U.N. Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, 48 , Nos. 1-8, PP. 39-41

\*: The Middle East & North Africa, 1995.

⊙: The Middle East & North Africa, 1998.

Acute labour supply shortages have been identified by many scholars as one of the main challenges facing the GCC states. Al-Saquaf (1975) affirmed that the Gulf states will continue, as a consequence, to need more native and foreign human resources to cope with the huge financial resources that the region provides. Similarly, al-Rumahi (1984) emphasized the lack of a sizeable population as a common problem facing all the Gulf states. He noted that, as a result of their small populations, the Gulf states depended and still continue to heavily depend on immigrants to compensate for challenging shortages in human resources. Figure (4.5) shows the differences in volume of immigrants among the GCC member states.

Though total population size differs between member states, the GCC countries are united by the fact they are all characterised by the same problem: a very small indigenous population. The unifying factor of a small native population has been at the root of each GCC state's concerns for its security including Saudi Arabia. These security concerns have been compounded by continually growing expatriate populations and the perceived threat it poses for the internal security of these states. Figure (4.4) and (4.5) show the growth of the expatriate community for different years.

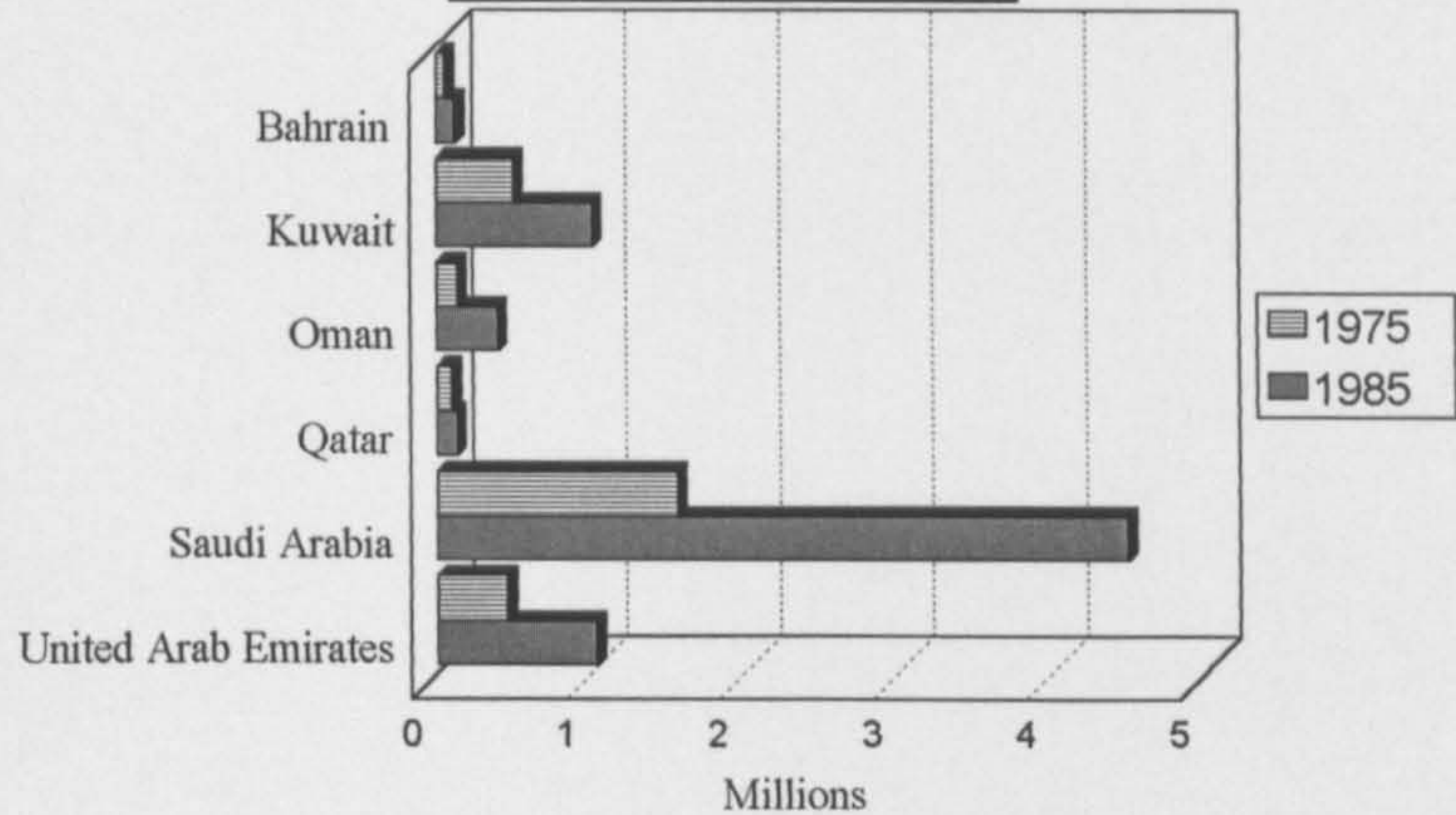


Table 4.5 The GCC Population: Nationals & Non-Nationals:

State	Estimation Year	Nationals	%	Non-Nationals	%	Total Population
Bahrain	1991	323305	63.6	184732	36.4	508037
Kuwait	1990	589221	28.6	1473054	71.4	2,062,275
Oman	1993	1480531	73.4	537060	26.6	2,017,591
☆Qatar	1992	126000	22.5	433209	77.5	559209
Saudi Arabia	1992	*3,500,000	20.7	*13,429,294	79.3	16,929,294
⊙ UAE	1993	*800,000	38.4	*1,283100	61.6	2,083100

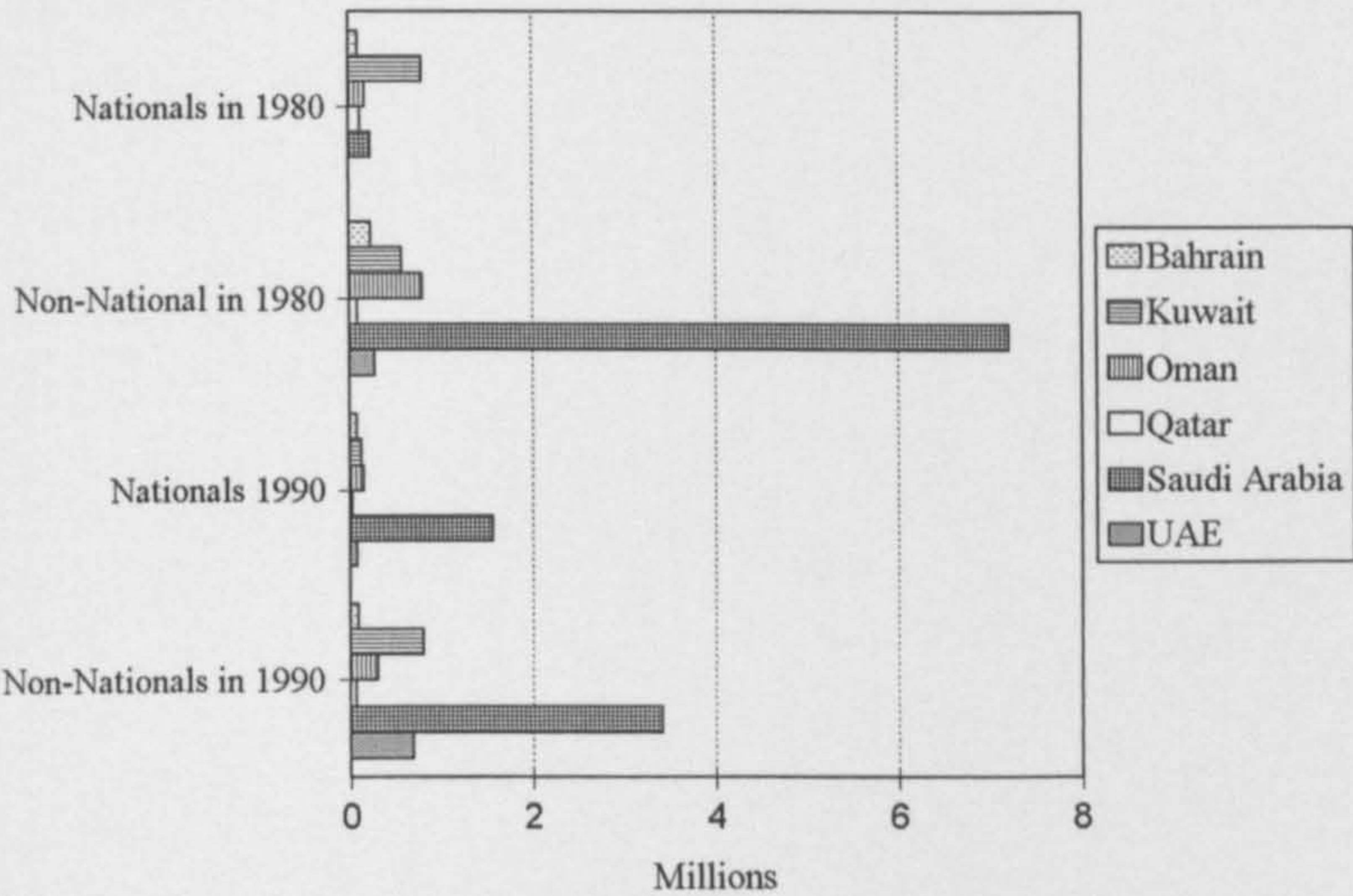
\*: Estimation.  
 Source: 1. The Middle East & North Africa, 1995.  
 2. ☆: al-Kuwari (1996), alArab Newspaper. 1996.  
 3. ⊙: Central Bank of the UAE.

Figure 4.4 Numbers of Immigrants In the GCC States  
In Year 1975 & 1985



Source: Birks & Sinclair (1989, 20-1).

Figure 4.5 The Labour Force in the GCC Member States  
In Year 1980 and 1990



1. 1990: Source: Birks and Sinclair, GCC Market Report Mountjoy Research Centre Durham, UK, 1990.  
 2. 1980: Source: Gulf Economic Bulletin ,1987.



### C. Economic Similarities:

As noted by Tarlton, compatibility of the economic, ethnic, and linguistic factors can support the unification process and vice-versa. With the sole exception of Bahrain, all the GCC member states are oil-producing countries. The economic similarities among the GCC member states as a *raison d'être* for the creation of the GCC has been much discussed in the literature where many scholars argue that the GCC is in essence an economic institution (Drysdale & Blake 1985).

Economic cooperation among the GCC states faces ongoing difficulties. In an evaluation of the GCC focusing on the degree of economic cooperation among the member states assessed how far in terms of the states have been willing to compromise on the question of sovereignty in favour of collective benefits, al-Rumahi (1984) found that the levels of economic cooperation remain low and largely hampered by intransigent prioritisation of national interests. Al-Otaiby (1987) also identified the economy as one of the most prominent unifying factors in the case of the GCC and affirmed that all of the GCC countries have witnessed the growth and development of petroleum-based economies, while sharing the common problems raised by a near total dependency on the single resources.

**Table 4.6 Oil Production in the Economies of the GCC Countries in 1989: Million US \$**

State	Oil Revenues	Oil Revenues as % of Economy	Government Revenue	
			Oil Sector Export % of total Exports	Oil Production Units
Bahrain	652	57	41.6	0.043
Kuwait	8922	83.1	83.7	1.753
Oman	2540	83.7	87.9	0.616
Qatar	2249	88	90	0.330
Saudi Arabia	25350	63.3	86.2	5.250
UAE	10359	69.5	87.5	1.910

**Source:** Gulf International Bank, Gulf Economic & Financial Report, Issue No. 10, Dec. 1990, vol.



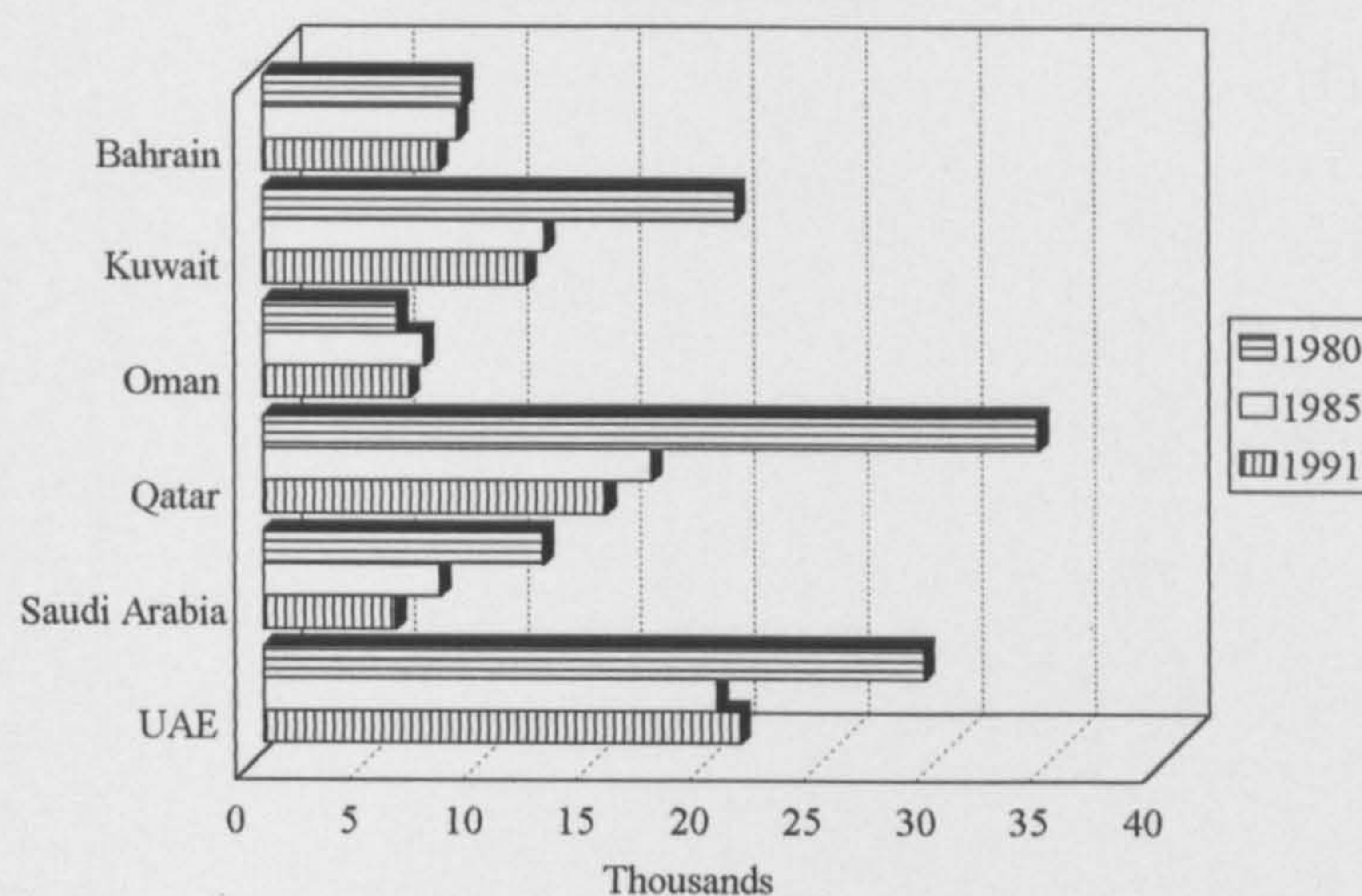
**Table 4.7 Oil Production in the GCC States, 1986-94: (Million/Metric Tones)**

Country	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1994
Bahrain	17	17	18	17	17	16	14
Kuwait	59	54	63	61	49	81	100
Oman	22	23	24	2568	28	35	40
Qatar	13	11	13	153	15	15	18
Saudi Arabia	209	175	212	210	266	340	401
UAE	55	55	59	74	84	95	104

Notes: n.a.: Not Available

Source: U.N. Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, 1994, 48, Nos. 1-4, PP 39-41

⊙: The Middle East &amp; North Africa, 1998.

**Table 4.6 GCC Countries by GNP for Several Years:  
GNP (US \$ Per Capita)**

Source: U.N. Statistic Yearbook, Issue: 39, New York, 1994, 226.

Fluctuation in oil prices in the 1980s had a devastating effect on the GCC member- states' economies. It has been alleged that the GCC states were willing, after the oil crisis, to diversify their economies, but that a number of internal problems stood in the way of such efforts (Al-Otaiby 1990). Most prominent of these problems was the lack of a suitable labour workforce. A second problem was the vulnerability inherent in the role of GCC states as suppliers of a single, albeit major, commodity to world markets and reliance on those same markets to provide a growing portion of the goods and services required by the GCC members for consumption and capital formation. Al-Otaiby (1990) and Said (1993) argued that the problems that faced the GCC states' attempts to diversify their economies was exacerbated by their failure to agree on common policy on oil production. This should not, however, be understood



as implying that there has been no coordination of policies among the GCC states in the field of oil production.

In general, economic similarities have been a unifying factor among the GCC states and they continue to function as one of the factors consolidating the cooperative bonds between the Gulf states. While it is true that attempts at economic 'harmonisation' among the GCC states has been substantially affected by the second Gulf war, economic cooperation continues to feature amongst the GCC's most prominent objectives. Thus, most of the resolutions endorsed by the organisation were concerned with either the oil sector or wider economic questions.

#### **D. Political Systems:**

Major similarities among the Gulf states arise from their political systems: they are all monarchical states, and in that sense differ from the majority of Arab countries. In each of the Gulf states, political power is in the hand of a dynasty. Peterson (1988) characterised the political systems of the Arab Gulf states as "Traditional Monarchies" in which governments are led by extended ruling families linked through informal but significant consultative mechanisms with religious and other tribal components of society. Drysdale & Black (1985) classified the Arab states into two type of political regimes: radical regimes, such as Algeria, Syria, Egypt, South Yemen, Iraq, Libya, and conservative regimes such as the Gulf states, Morocco, and Jordan. They also pointed out that over the years, though the Gulf royal families have disagreed on a variety of issues, especially the sensitive question of sovereignty, they have always come together for mutual protection.

The similarities of the political systems of GCC states has been a topic of much discussion in the literature concerned with the Gulf and the GCC. Nawwar (1993) argued that previous regional attempts at promoting inter-state cooperation and forging regional alliances within the Arab world were carried out primarily by nationalistic movements which called for and urged, among other things, democratic practices and the establishment of democratic institutions. The GCC royal families



saw in the ideology of these nationalistic movements a threat to their conservative regimes. It was in an attempt to counter such a threat that the political elites of the Gulf states pursued regional alliance. The Gulf tribal systems overlapped, bringing the sheikhs in the Gulf states closer and strengthening their relations. The institutions of 'traditional monarchies' were one of the major factors that assisted in the creation of the GCC. In contrast, most of the previous attempts at unification within the Arab world, including the Arab Cooperation Council which brought together Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen, failed owing to different political ideologies and the difficulties in reconciling these differences. Failure of the Maghreb Union was also on account of irreconcilable ideological differences. Differences in political regimes and political ideologies has thus been a major impediment to regional integration in the Arab world.

## II. Differences among GCC members:

### **1. Territorial Size:**

Territorial size is one of the main elements of difference among the GCC countries, though, some scholars have claimed that territorial dissimilarities were in fact one of the factors that played an advantageous role in the emergence of the Council. Asymmetry among GCC states regarding territorial size arises from the fact that while half of the GCC members, including Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar, are micro-states, Saudi Arabia is a large state. To a degree territorial asymmetry has been translated into power asymmetry within the GCC organisation, with smaller states like Bahrain and Qatar occupying 'second position' to Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia's dominant influence within the GCC has caused much resentment among some of the small countries of the organisation. The Kuwaiti parliament rejected the security treaty in 1983 on account of the belief that it allowed bigger countries to dominate smaller ones. Some scholars accused some of the large GCC countries of trying to increase their oil reserves through expanding the size of their territories. Border disputes among the GCC states relate frequently to the struggle for control over oil reserves (Schofield 1994). Blake (1994) suggested shared



zones as an alternative to absolute state sovereignty and as a solution to the GCC's territorial problems. The border disputes among GCC states has not only strained relations between them but might well undermine the future of the organisation. Tension has characterised relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar ever since 1992 when border disputes developed into brief but bloody clashes (the *al-Khafus* incident). Angered by the incident, Qatar sought a rapprochement with Saudi Arabia's arch enemies, Iran and Iraq. The conspicuous differences in territorial size among the states is that sense a source of unease and tension among the GCC states and that sense a stumbling block in the way of the GCC's efforts to bring the member states into a closer form of economic and political union.

## 2. Economic Size:

Judged in terms of their economies, the GCC states fall into two broad categories:- the rich countries of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar, and the second relatively poorer countries of Bahrain and Oman. As is clear from Table (4.8), per capita GNP in Bahrain and Oman is slightly lower than in the rest of the GCC members. Lack of natural resources account for the weak economic situation in both Bahrain and Oman. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have supported the Bahraini budget either through assets or oil quotas.

**Table 4.8 GCC Countries by GNP:**

Country	GNP (US \$ Per Capita)		
	1980	1985	1991
Bahrain	8853	8635	7759
Kuwait	20889	12458	11618
Oman	5967	7112	6479
Qatar	34226	17188	15165
Saudi Arabia	12373	7837	5853
UAE	29191	20075	21057

Source: U.N. Statistic Yearbook, issue: 39, New York, 1994, 226.

Table 4.8 also illustrates the differences in economic size among the member states. This variation in economic size represents, an element of 'asymmetry' among the GCC member states, potentially a divisive factor, though not one, so critical as to jeopardise the continuance of the organisation.



### 3. Military Imbalances:

GCC member states share the problem of manpower shortages to meet their military needs. The military imbalance between the GCC states and the neighbouring powers of Iran and Iraq has been a main source of concern for the GCC states (Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9 The GCC states Military Balance:**

State	*Defence Budget (\$/ Million)	Estimation Year	Army	Air Force	Navy	1 Total Army
Bahrain	248.1	1994	6800	700	600	8100
Kuwait	1683.5	1994	10000	2500	2500	16600
Oman	1593.7	1994	25000	3500	4200	42900
Qatar	301.4	1994	8500	800	800	10100
Saudi Arabia	16480.2	1994	68000	18000	11000	101000
UAE	2026.3	1992	57000	2500	2000	61500
Iran	2300	1992	51300	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Iraq	2600	1993	38200	30000	2000	n.a.
Egypt	2730	1993	310000	30000	20000	440000
Israel	7200	1994	134000	32000	65000	602000
Jordan	411.1	1994	90000	8000	600	98600
Yemen	375	1993	61000	3500	1500	85000

\*: Some of local exchange rate figures transferred to \$ equivalent exchange rate of each country in (31 May 1994) for the comparison purpose.

1: including the National Guard and others.

Source: The Middle East & North Africa 1995, 41 ed., Europe Publications Limited.

**Table 4.10 Estimation of GCC Military Expenditures: (\*\$/ Million) (Estimates)**

Country	1982	1985	1988	1990	1991
Bahrain	281.9	150.5	187.2	203.7	195.7
Kuwait	1245.8	1579.1	1373.7	1515.2	n.a.
Oman	1513	1940.1	1351.6	1354.2	1406.3
Qatar	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Saudi Arabia	23447.9	19249.2	14906.4	15264.7	28282
UAE	1912.6	1973.7	1526.3	1532.6	1578.9

\*: The real figures were in local currency and transferred to \$ equivalent exchange rate of each country in (31 May 1994) to compare.

n.a.: Not Available

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 1992 World Armaments & Disarmament, P. 255.

The lack of both collective and sufficient defence planning on the part of the GCC states is another problem. Table 4.10 shows the GCC states' expenditure in the military sector. However, the military imbalance among the member states themselves is also one of the problems standing in the way of effective collective planning in the area of common defence. For instance, while Qatar possesses an army of 8500, neighbouring Saudi Arabia's army totals some 81000 men. With the exception of

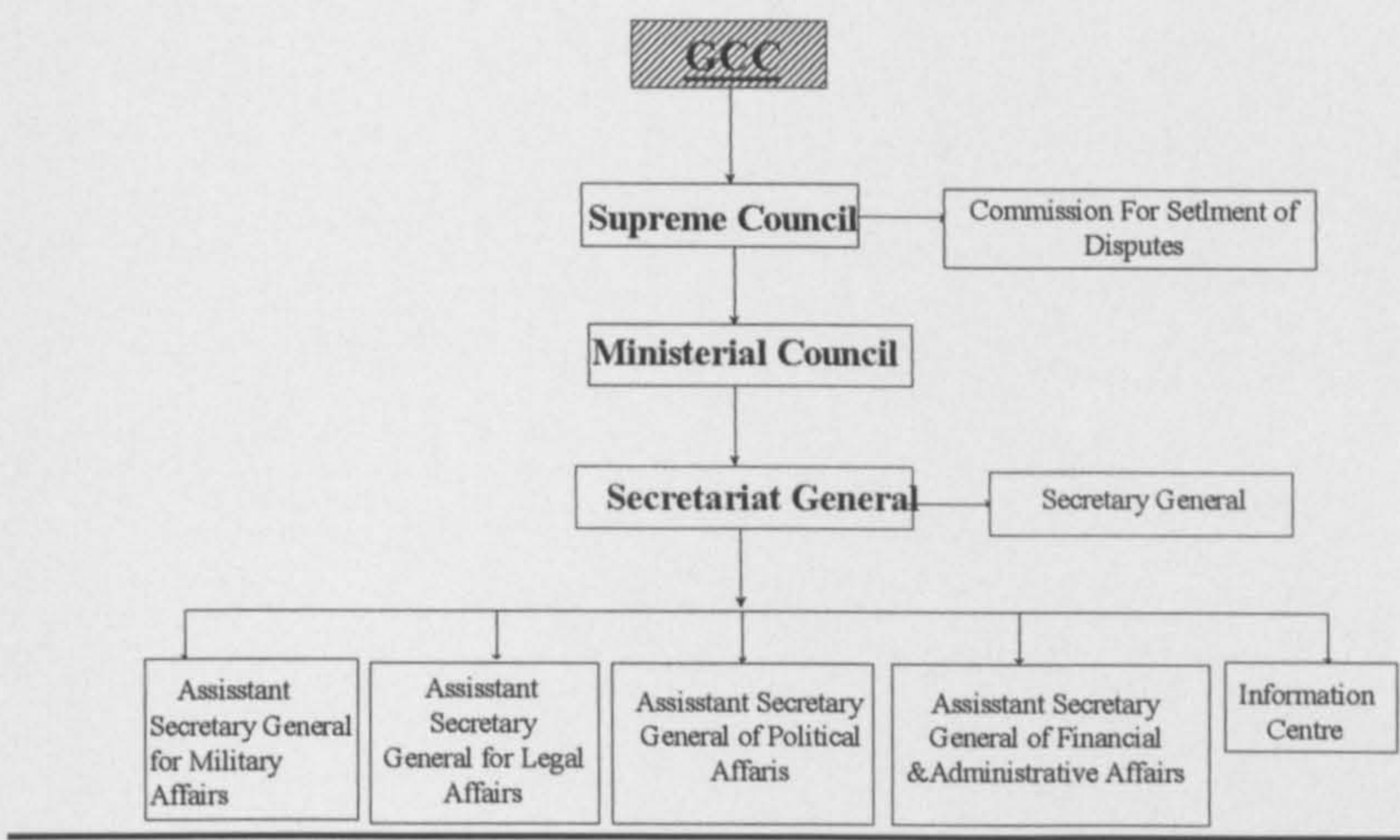


Kuwait, conscription is not adopted in any GCC member state. Iraq's lightening invasion of Kuwait provided obvious testimony to the striking military imbalance between some small Gulf states and other major powers in the region. These problems underline how that countries such as Kuwait and Qatar, which are also small both demographically and territorially, cannot provide an effective military defence against external aggression except as part of an alliance (Cordesman 1984).

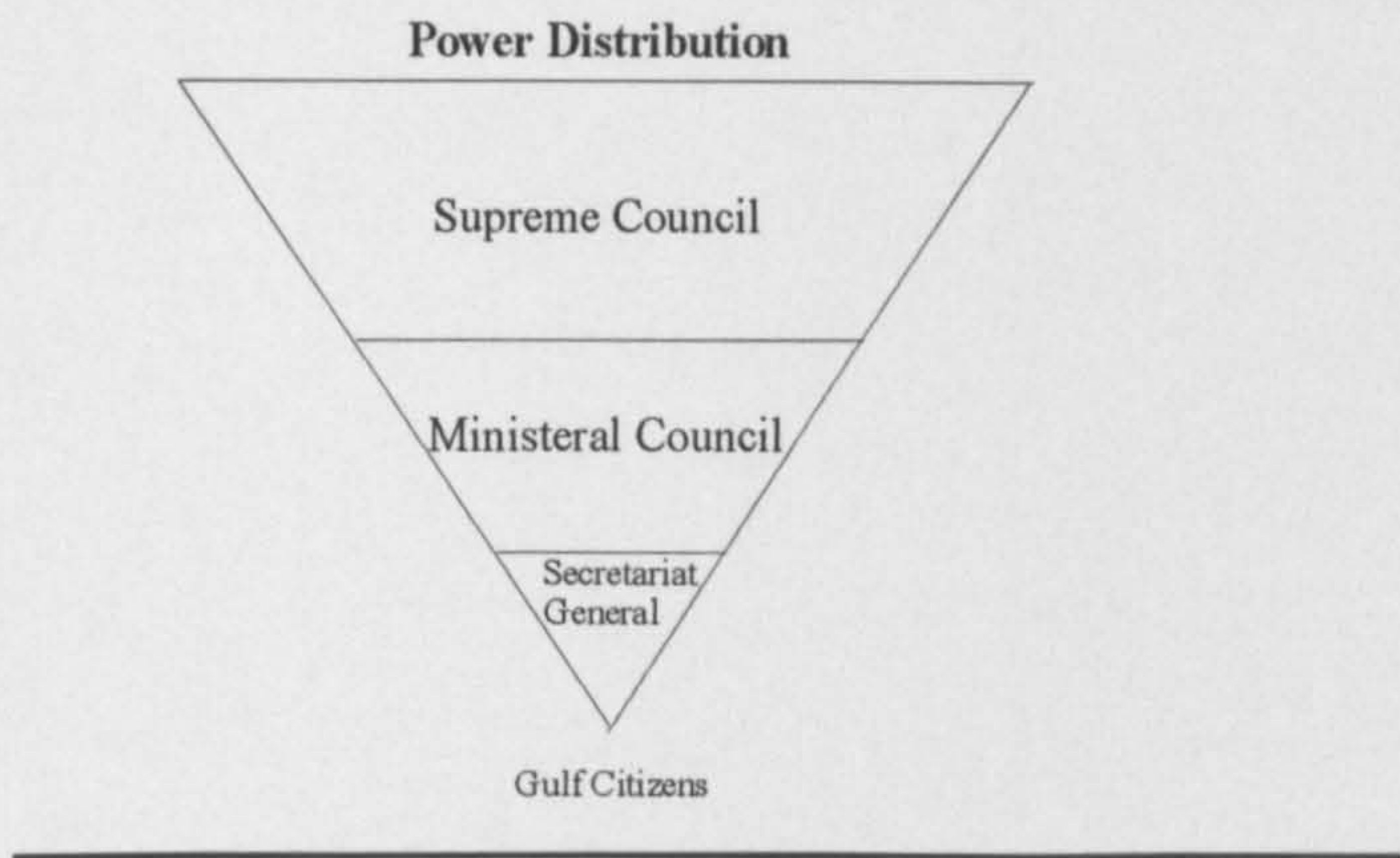
4.5 Organizational Structure of the GCC:

The GCC consists of three main bodies: the Supreme Council, the highest GCC authority, the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat General. Power is concentrated in the Supreme and Ministerial Councils (Figure 4.7 and 4.8).

**Figure 4.7 The Basic Organisation of the GCC**



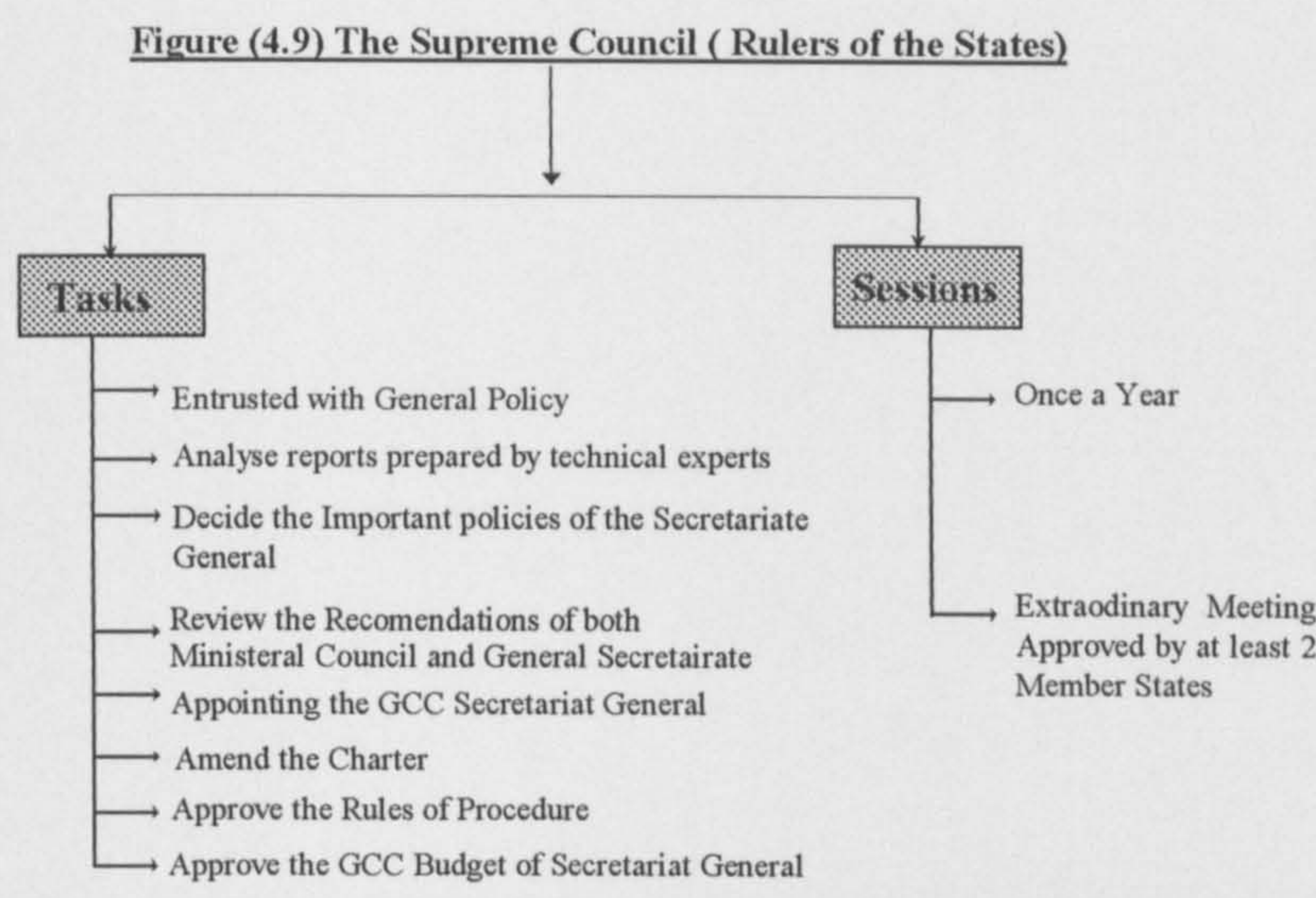
**Figure 4.8 Level of Power and the GCC Main Bodies**





## 1. Supreme Council:

The GCC Supreme Council (SC) is the highest source of authority in the organization. Each state is represented in the SC by its head of state. Figure 4.9 shows both its functions and the timetabling of sessions. Each state has one vote within the SC, and while decisions on substantive matters must be carried by a unanimous vote, a majority vote is required to pass resolutions bearing on procedural matters (Article 9). It should be noted that the GCC decisions are more like recommendations, akin to those of the Arab League or the United Nations (Al-Mubark & Hadyah 1985).



## 2. Ministerial Council:

The Ministerial Council is the executive power and the second highest authority in the GCC. The MC is comprised of the foreign ministers of the member states and other delegated ministers. The council presidency is exercised by the member state which presided over the last ordinary session of the Supreme council, or if necessary, the state which will host the next session (Article 11).

One of the Ministerial council's tasks is to produce recommendations for the special ministers to draw up the policies for the GCC. For the most part the council is



little more than a platform for coordinating opinions among the ministers of the various member states. The Ministerial functions are outlined in Article 12 of the appendix to the GCC charter.

### **3. Secretariat General:**

The Secretariat General is the administrative body of the GCC which is located in Riyadh. Saudi Arabia has been chosen the place of SG simply because it is the largest member state. The Secretariat General and its employees enjoy diplomatic immunity.

The competence of the Secretary General is confined to overseeing financial and administrative matters. This limitation of the Secretary General's and the Secretariat's powers has contributed to increasing the gap between the Secretariat General and the two higher councils (i.e., SC and MC), and even between the member states. The GCC's annual budget is prepared by the Secretary General in consultation with all the member states and submitted for endorsement to the Ministerial Council. Equal participation in the Secretariat General is aimed at averting control by those member states accounting for larger parts of the budget (al-Mubark & Hadyah (1985) and al-Anaba Newspaper, 30, Oct., 1985). The Secretariat General should be granted more powers to allow it to become as active as the Secretariat Generals of other international organisations.

### **4.6 Objectives of the GCC:**

As discussed earlier the GCC aims are explicitly laid down in Article Four of the organisation's Charter. A first aim of the GCC is to achieve coordination, integration and cooperation between members states in all fields and, ultimately, (political, economic and social) unity between the members. A second major aim is to strengthen relations, across various policy fields between member states. A third and equally important aim is to harmonise policies concerning the economy, finance,



commerce, customs, communication, education, culture, health, information, tourism, legislation and administration. A fourth aim is to stimulate scientific and technological progress in the areas of industry, mining, water, and animal resources; establish joint scientific research and joint ventures and encourage cooperation in the private sector for the collective good.

These objectives remain, however, somewhat indeterminate where the notion of 'unity', critical to the vision around which the GCC was created, is itself defined ambiguously. Moreover, the Charter neither mentioned nor dealt with the issue of 'common defence' against potential external threats or aggression. In fact, the Charter fails to mention the issue of coordination of military policies, notwithstanding the fact that 'homeland defence' is one, if not the main, concerns of all member states of the organisation.

Al-Otaby (1990) explained this omission in terms of the GCC states' keenness to foster non-political relations and cooperation rather than pursue any ambitious objectives of common defence that might antagonise neighbouring Middle Eastern countries. Another reason is the consensus of the member states around the notion that military cooperation is a natural consequence of a federal structure (al-Otaby (1990)). Bishara, the former Secretary General, affirmed that "... realising the objectives [laid down] in the charter and in the Economic Agreement Treaty will certainly lead to semi-confederate Gulf relationships." (al-Anaba, Dec. 12, 1992). However, on another occasion, Bishara characterised the GCC Charter as laying down a significant formula for cooperation among the GCC states rather than a blueprint for federal or confederal formula, insisting that the notions of federal or confederal formulas that have been mooted in Gulf society owe more to popular interpretations of the GCC Charter than to any Charter objectives or GCC policies as such (al-Anaba, May 3, 1987). Al-Rumahi (1981) argues that the word "cooperation" captures the essence of what the GCC pursues by way of objectives, noting that though it had been used so often, the term "unity" seems to have little to do with the nature and structure of the relations existing among the member states.



The apparent contradiction in the GCC Secretary General's characterisation of the formula of cooperation pursued by this institution is perhaps the best reflection of the indeterminacy and ambiguity of the organisation's Charter. Political observers, nevertheless, define the GCC multi-point cooperation plan as a formula for a confederal organization.

In the field of economic cooperation, the Charter urged the coordination of policies covering the oil and other industries, joint ventures in Petro-chemicals and agriculture. Article 11 of the Economic Agreement Treaty declares that “the member states shall endeavour to coordinate their policies with regard to all aspects of the oil industry including extraction, refining, marketing, processing, pricing, the exploration of natural gas, and development.” Cooperation in these areas aimed at creating a common market as an important step and as the basis for boosting the economies of all members. A second aim from cooperation was to open the doors for the free movement of both nationals and capital, and remove customs and tariff barriers among the member states. Economic cooperation has so far led to adoption of a number of interesting policies. Most notable among these is (i) a treaty, effective since March 1983, whereby national products of a member state could enter the market of another member state without incurring custom duties. (ii) an agreement, effective also since March 1983, sanctioning the free movement of GCC citizens and ensuring the rights of GCC citizens to work in member states, and (iii) the establishment of the Gulf Investment Company in November 1983.

The economic fait accompli stressed the need for more cooperation among the member states. Yet, as al-Otaiby (1990) has shown levels of trade among the GCC countries remain relatively low on account of the relative absence of economic cooperation among these states, and from the similar rather than complementary nature of the economies of the member states (see also al-Zamil (1989) on this point).

Given the events such as the Iran/Iraq war, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that took place during the 1980s and 1990 and the effects these events had on the security and stability of the GCC states, it is not difficult to see why economic



cooperation among these states has not developed significantly. In addition to the disastrous effects of the second Gulf war on some of the member states, they have endured other incidents which have hardly created an atmosphere conducive to pursuing economic cooperation as a priority. Most notable among these events were (a) the unsuccessful plot in Bahrain in December 1981, (b) the shooting down of an Iranian F-4 Phantom Air Force plane by Saudi Air Force over Saudi Arabian territory on June 1984, (MEED, Nov. 1984, pp. 20-21), (c) the bombing of Kuwaiti facilities in 1984 and 1985, and, (d) perhaps most important, the assassination attempt on the motorcade of Kuwait's Amir by a suicide bomber on May 25, 1986 (al-Qabas, 26, May 1986). One would in fact expect such events to assist more rapprochement between the member states of the GCC, but all they did was to hamper cooperation among them.

The creation of the GCC has had important benefits for the littoral states in the field of political cooperation (e.g. the coordination of foreign affairs) in general. However, there is a feeling that, by joining the GCC alliance, smaller states like Bahrain, Qatar and Oman have come under the dominance of bigger states in particular of Saudi Arabia (see Twinam (1987) for an argument to this effect).

Prior to 1990, the GCC states maintained a nonbelligerent, neutral status vis-à-vis all external conflicts and managed to avoid involvement in many of the conflicts that the Gulf region witnessed during the 1970s and 1980s. After 1990, however, the situation changed and all the GCC states emerged as more conspicuously Pro-Western. But instead of coordinating their military policies and plans with a view to reaching a common defence treaty that would enable them to counter any possible external threats or aggression, each of the GCC states signed a defence treaty with an outside power (e.g. US, UK, France).

Border disputes are one of the major obstacles that continue to constitute a stumbling block in the way of greater cooperation among the GCC states. Al-Kuwari (1992) argued that the failure of the GCC states to solve border disputes among its member states not only rules out any possible future unity between them, but hampers



the realisation of even the organisation's Charter objectives. Failure of both the Commission of Disputes and the GCC Supreme Council to resolve the border disputes to the satisfaction of all involved parties has caused increased tensions among some member states of the organisation which often developed into military clashes, as in the case of Bahrain and Qatar (see Chapter 11).

#### **4.7 Overview:**

Following a brief historical background to the GCC, this chapter has examined the political, cultural, economic, military, and linguistic elements of compatibility and incompatibility among the member states of this regional alliance and the effects such elements have had in either promoting the emergence of this organisation or hindering its progress. Discussion in this chapter also touches on the reactions of neighbouring Middle Eastern countries, Arab countries and foreign powers to the emergence of the regional organisation of the GCC and on the rationale underlying such reactions.

It is true that the member states of the GCC have so many things in common: besides a common language and a common religion, similar ethnic origins, a common cultural heritage, and similar system of governance, these Arabian Gulf states share the same economic sources of wealth and dependencies and face the same threats from neighbouring powers (see earlier sections of this chapter for detailed discussion of these commonalities among the GCC states). Cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic and economic commonalities are, however, neither a prerequisite for the emergence of a regional alliance nor a guarantee that an alliance would succeed or survive. It is political understanding and consensus that essentially defines the context within which an alliance or regional organisation will either fail or succeed. Politics, be it regional or international, is primarily governed by considerations of immediate or potential interests and gains and to that extent, no similarities, shared values or common concerns, strong as they might be, would be enough in themselves to guarantee that an alliance or regional grouping would achieve its aims. In other words, there can be no cooperation of any significance and in any field without political cooperation. The



GCC is perhaps a good example in this regard. Greater cooperation and coordination of policies in the various fields is, we recall, the objective principally underlying in the emergence of the GCC as a regional organisation. However, cooperation in many fields, and especially the important fields of security, the economy and foreign policy has yet to reach desirable level or, in certain areas, even to materialise and such cooperation continues to be constantly undercut by the absence of common political will to compromise on such issues as national sovereignty and national interests. The absence of a political understanding and a political will to priorities common concerns and common benefits of cooperation over issues of national sovereignty not only continue to hinder cooperation in such fields as the economy, health, education and immigration but is the principle source of the persistence of border disputes among various members of the organisation as well as the persistence of a strong tendency among the member states to adopt and carry out policies in total independence of its partners in the GCC.



## **Changing World and Regional Order and the GCC**

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### **5.1 Introduction:**

Chapter five examines the role and status of the GCC before and after 1990. It investigates the various external factors leading to the emergence of the Gulf organisation. As noted earlier, it is not only internal circumstances that were important for the decision to set up the GCC; the circumstances of the regional and world orders have also played an equally important factor in its emergence. The economic and strategic importance of the Gulf region has made it the focus of much attention, especially during the twentieth century, firstly from Britain and the Cold War. The interest of these powers in the Gulf was and continues to be fundamentally driven by the need to secure economic interests and areas of political and strategic influence.

The 'new world order' has been defined as the end of the ideological confrontation between the capitalist and the communist camp which characterised pre-1990 international relations. The end of old world order has signalled the emergence of the US as the single most dominating economic and political power in the world order, (see also al-Alkim (1994) for similar argument). Others such as Magdoff (1992) termed the new world order as the 'globalization' of internal relations, where the need to expand economically has become the mainstay and most prominent feature of world politics and international relations. Taylor (1989) argues that the cold world years saw the emergence of the United States as a superpower, replacing Britain's position during the colonial period, and the replacement of Germany by the Soviet Union as the main challenger to US. He also argues that the Soviet Union was the country most responsible for destabilising the old world order, and paving, thereby, the way for the start of the Cold War.



The interest of the West in the Gulf was and continues to be basically motivated by the need to secure access to the huge oil resources of the region. The oil wealth of the Gulf region makes political stability in this part of the Middle East of utmost importance to Western powers. Equally it has made the Gulf area, given the importance of the oil commodity to the industrial sector in the West and the strategic importance of the region, a focus of much economic and political competition between both superpowers (i.e., USA and USSR), as these powers vied for political leverage and economic domination.

## **5.2 Colonial Origin of the GCC Member States:**

Historically, the political and economic importance of the Gulf region grew after the discovery of the oil in the early twentieth century. The discovery of oil in early twentieth century brought the Gulf to the forefront of world politics (al-Maskarie (1992)) and fuelled, in the process, a power rivalry between the two superpowers as well as such powers as Britain, Germany, and France which has continued, in different forms, till the present time. Since the 1930s, Britain maintained a military presence in the region to prevent the other colonising powers' involvement or intervention in the Gulf region.

The political, economic, and social aspects and structures of the Gulf have been dramatically altered by the emergence of the Gulf states. Historically, the importance of the Gulf attracted successive waves of European powers, the Portuguese, Dutch, French, British, and also the Ottomans had all had some presence at some point in the region. The recent history of the Gulf states predominantly shaped by two powers, the Ottoman and British empires. The French too were interested in areas north of the Gulf (Iraq) and mainly in the north of Africa. However, their influence in the Gulf emerged in the nineteenth century in Muscat which they used as a base to secure the sea approaches to their newly-acquired possessions in Indo-China and Madagascar (Marlow 1962, p17).



The influence of the British colonial presence in the Gulf and the establishment of the GCC was significant in the sense that the relationships that characterised the history of the Gulf states prior to independence have eased the establishment of the GCC. First, the British imposed similar economic and administrative policies on the Gulf states which came under their tutelage, with the exception of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, cooperation among the new Gulf states existed during the colonial power era: during the 1950s and prior to the advent of independence, the littoral Gulf states, together with Britain, held discussions about their future, cooperating over common problems such as piracy.

This cooperation that existed among the Gulf states continued after the withdrawal of the British. Soon after the advent of independence, there were attempts (see Chapter 3 and 4 for a more extensive discussion of this point) to bring some of the newly independent Gulf states into some sort of a federation. Such endeavours led to the merging of seven of the Gulf sheikhdoms into what is now known as the UAE federation.

### **5.3 Old World Order:**

The Gulf states, like all countries of the international community, have been affected by the Western bloc-Eastern bloc stand-off that dominated international politics and relations during the cold war era as well as the South/North divide that continues to characterise world politics and economies. The relationship between the developing countries and the industrial world has always been asymmetrical, both in economic and political terms. This relationship between the two has been 'governed' by the world economy, the real generator for all sorts of conflicts in the world, including the East/West and North/South divides. In centre-periphery terms, the relationship between North and South is defined by two basic processes. First, the North, sought raw materials in the South, the poor, modernising and under developed



periphery. Second, the North also sought labour to support the industrial process, and the supplier was again the South. The struggle between the superpowers was thus rooted in the need to gain (access to) such privileges and resources as raw material and labour or to deny access to the other. This competition centred on the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, the focus of competition often being the developing countries.

Short (1993) argues that during the years of the 'cold war' international politics and relations were largely shaped and governed by the economic rivalry and ideological confrontation between the two major superpowers, the United States and the USSR. He contends in this regard that "the political geography of the world order has, until very recently, been dominated by the actions of the two superpowers. The USA and USSR have dominated the world - indeed, to all intents and purposes they *were* the world order. They provided the context in which other nations adopted foreign policies and pursued economic objectives." (p.57). Short also explains the real aims of the two superpowers in the international order as those of securing, preserving and extending areas of political and economic influence. Thus, "[s]uperpowers attempt to maintain and improve their geopolitical position by extending their relative spheres of influence" and that "[t]he goal of superpowers is to maintain their position on top of the world order. They achieved their status through economic power, military might and political influence." (p.72). Macfarlane (1990) explains the competition for influence and domination in the Third World between the USA and USSR in terms of the ideological feud between these two camps as well as a perceived vacuum in the post-independence Third World. Third World countries in turn were able to foster competition between the United States and the Soviet Union by 'playing off' one superpower against the other.

The confrontation between the two superpowers and the polarisation in international relations and politics that resulted was, according to scholars (e.g. Short (1993) Rajab (1989)), rooted in a relentless straggle for economic and political dominance and superiority. Pursuit of economic hegemony and search for areas of



political ideological influence generally took different forms, including the provision of economic subsidies to client countries. One notable way of winning over countries to the political ideology and economic philosophy of a superpower state and a way for the latter to safeguard political and economic interests. However, pursuit of economic and political dominance has not always been indirect and would take a different and more direct form in the event the interests of the superpower are seriously threatened. The threat to the interests of the West as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait saw the mobilisation of Western forces against the invading Iraqi regime. Other instances include the USSR's support for the socialist regime in the Afghanistan war and the alignment of the US with the 'Mujahdeen' in their war with the socialist government. Confrontation became inevitable when the interests of either superpower came under threat.

The Third World has been divided into three types of camps: First, the pro-Eastern bloc, aligned to the USSR, such as Cuba, China, Nicaragua, Libya, South and Yemen; second, the pro-Western bloc, aligned to the US, such as the Gulf states, Jordan, much of South East Asia including Thailand and Singapore and, third, the 'Non-aligned' countries, neutral towards both former blocs, such as India (see Frank (1992)).

For many Third world countries, the post-independence situation was one of economic struggle and political instability. Coupled with weak governments, these factors made Third World countries especially easy targets for domination by the superpowers. As a result of the pressure exerted by the superpowers on decolonising and post-colonial countries, and in an attempt to break away from at least diminish the level of superpowers' dominance, a move was made to create a non-aligned bloc. Third World countries also sought tighter and stronger relations with their (regional) neighbours with a view to decreasing the superpower's influence and domination. The majority of scholars (e.g., Dikshit (1975), Duchaeck (1970)) attribute the emergence of various forms of unions (i.e., federations, confederations, etc.) among Third World countries to the threat created by superpower hegemony and to the need among such Third World countries to maintain economic and political autonomy.



The Middle East was looked upon by the major power players as a buffer zone in the confrontation between the East/West and, thus, became a focal point of struggle between the two rival blocs before and after the Cold War. Short (1993) argued that between 1947 and 1964 the Soviet Union's presence in the Third World centred on the fostering of local nationalist movements against capitalism. Thus, in the Arab world, the Soviets supported nationalist movements in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, South Yemen, Oman and Libya. Prodded by the Soviets, the Arab revolutionary regimes pursued ideals of Pan-Arabism in the 1960s and early 1970s in their attempt to confront neo-capitalism. In reaction, and to safeguard and consolidate Western interests in the region, the West strengthened its relationship with Israel and supported the conservative Middle Eastern regimes, especially the oil rich states of the Gulf.

Following the emergence of revolutionary regimes in some of the Arab states in the early 1950s, the confrontation in the Middle East shifted to a conflict between the US and the newly emergent Arab revolutionary regimes. The Arab states saw the creation of a state of Israel as a calculated move by the Western bloc to maintain their interests in the Middle East. According to al-Ebraheem (1982), the inauguration of Israel as a state inevitably led to confrontation and the subsequent outbreak of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars were a continuation of the confrontation, by then an integral part of the Cold War.

The Middle East thus became an area of confrontation and instability aggravated by the unwavering support by the US for the new state of Israel (Ebraheem 1982). The West's endorsement and support of Israel created deep-seated resentment in the Arab world. The East/West stand-off affected the various countries of the Arab world to different degrees. The Arab countries of North Africa proved highly susceptible to socialism, with the emergence in a number of them of revolutionary and/or socialist regimes. A contributory factor in the emergence of these regimes was the part nationalism was to play in moulding the new states, as was to be



the case in Libya and Egypt. The more conservative Gulf states, however, were resistant to the spread of socialism on account of it being contradictory to the principles of Islam and to the strength of the existing political regimes. While antithetical to the traditional monarchical regimes, and though the socialist ideology was rejected by the conservative Gulf states, socialism remained a constant threat in the region partly on account of it having taken such a strong hold in such countries as South Yemen, Egypt, under the nationalist regime of Nasser, and Iraq, under the Ba'thist socialist party.

Another aspect of the changing political realities of the Gulf and Middle East was the emergence of Iran as a new regional power in the 1970s. Under the Shah and backed by the West especially the US, Iran emerged as a new guardian of the West's interests in the region, and as a new bastion against the spread of Soviet influence and threat in the Gulf. After the collapse of the pro-Western regime of the Shah and the institution of an Islamic revolutionary regime publicly antagonistic to the US, the latter began grooming Iraq as the new regional power and the new ally in the region.

The struggle in the Gulf region between the two superpowers was essentially driven by economic interests and search for political influence. The end of the colonial period saw the Gulf sheikhdoms in search of another superpower to assume Britain's role in maintaining security in the region, causing heightened tension and an increased rivalry between the new superpowers.

The Gulf's natural resources, and especially its immense oil reserves, made the area of obvious importance geopolitically for the West, and for the US, in particular. The political stability of the Gulf region was at the forefront of the US foreign policy concerns owing to its huge oil resources, both prior to and in the aftermath of the collapse of the pro-American regime of the Shah in Iran.



## **World Order and the Emergence of GCC:**

The demise of Great Britain as a colonial power, and its withdrawal from the Gulf region in 1960's and 1970's had important local implications. Al-Otaiby (1984) argued that Britain's withdrawal highlighted two problems. First, withdrawal was accompanied by the creation of several mini-states in the Gulf region, which had formerly been under the aegis of the imperial power. From the British point of view, the reason for withdrawal was financial. The West saw the creation of these new Gulf states as a positive step towards the maintaining of stability in the region. Al-Otaiby (1984) asserted that Britain's decision to terminate its presence in that part of the world contributed to increased instability in the area. Paradoxically, withdrawal was accompanied by increasing dependence on oil by the world economy- the West's interests in the region was increasing.

Second, withdrawal of Britain from the Gulf opened the door for a struggle between the new superpowers - the USA and the USSR - as these vied for economic and political influence and supremacy in the region. The rivalry that characterised the relations between the two superpowers as they competed for economic and political advantages was one factor, but no means the only factor, that motivated the emergence of the GCC. The discussion will next turn to the various reasons generally accepted as having contributed to the rise of the GCC. The aim will be to determine the nature or role a number of factors played in the creation of the GCC.

### **5.4 The Establishment of the GCC:**

As noted previously, the reasons underlying the establishment of GCC involved a combination of both external and internal factors. This section outlines these two factors relating them to the changing world orders in which the Gulf region has been 'located'. Both reasons generated pressures on the Gulf states to pursue policies of greater and cooperation.



*A. External factors:*

Several factors help explain why the GCC was established:

The Islamic revolution in Iran: The collapse of the moderate and conspicuously pro-American Shah regime in Iran led to much political turbulence in Iran in 1979. As al-Otaiby (1984) has argued the Islamic Shi'ite revolution caused considerable apprehension in the Gulf states. Since Iran was a major regional Gulf power, the upheaval in it created a apprehension among not only the Gulf states but also the major superpowers and particularly the US. During the Shah's regime, the US was actively engaged in strengthening its military presence in the Gulf to maintain the stability of the region and the security of its own interests and those of the West generally. The Americans used their leverage with the Shah to ensure that their own interests in the Gulf region would be maintained. They also built up Iran's military arsenal with a view to turning Iran into a prospective 'policeman' of the Gulf and to halt any possible political turbulence and agitation in the region. However, the largely unanticipated coup d'état against the Shah in 1979, the exit of the latter from Iran and the revolution of Ayatollah Rohollah Khomeini which swept over the country turned the US policy in the Gulf upside down.

The Islamic revolutionary elites in Iran announced publicly the illegitimacy of monarchy in Islam, implying that, from the perspective of the Islamic faith, the Gulf regimes were unlawful. As noted by Ramazani (1979), the Iranian government sought to inflame local unrest by reasserting its commitment not to relinquish control over the two UAE islands of Greater and Lesser Tunabs which had been annexed by Iran during the Shah regime. Moreover, Iran's claim during the Shah's regime that Bahrain, because of its majority Shi'ite population, was part of the Great Persian Empire was reasserted by the new Islamic regime in Iran. These claims were the first of a series of policies designed by the new Iranian leadership to create unrest in the Gulf states.



The Islamic Shi'ite fundamentalist leaders of Iran threatened to export the Islamic revolution to neighbouring countries, a direct threat to the Gulf regimes and Iraq. The Iranian government threatened to 'use' the Shi'ite Moslems in the Gulf states to cause agitation and political upheaval in the Gulf. This in turn represented a direct threat to the US and Western interests. The Iranian government stirred up confrontation and aggression in the Gulf by a determined effort to take and hold Western hostages. Thus, not only the Western economy was to come under threat, but the whole West became a target for Iranian revolution. The Gulf states' cooperation and policy coordination in the face of Iranian threat was fragmented and, at best, minimal in the early years of the war. Confronted with the imminent Iranian threat, the formation of the GCC was the only viable course open for the Gulf states in order to preserve their sovereignty against Iranian intimidation and aggression.

Thus, the Iranian revolution provided a forcible impetus for the Gulf states to seek some type of unification for the purpose of ensuring their survival and political stability. The West's support for the nascent GCC was necessary to ensure the success of the experiment, strengthen the stability of the organisation's member states, and, by implication, protect and preserve Western interests in the Gulf. The role of the Islamic revolution in the emergence of the GCC organisation was undeniable, (see also al-Feshawai (1992)).

Iran/Iraq war: Though it was Iraq which declared war on Iran during the 1979 armed conflict, which was to prove so catastrophic for both sides, it was Iran that in fact provoked Iraq into starting the war through its continuous attempts at stirring unrest among the Shi'ite population of Iraq (see el-Rayyes (1988)). A series of acts of aggression undertaken by either side along the Iraqi/Iranian border compelled Iraq to cancel the Algeria Pact, agreed between the two countries during the Shah's rule stipulating the joint use of the Shutt al- Arab waters.

Iraq also represented another threat to the Gulf states. However, the involvement of the regional powers of Iran and Iraq in a protracted war prevented either side from attaining some sort of hegemony in the Gulf region. Once the Gulf



states resolved to pursue cooperation among themselves, there followed prolonged negotiations as to the type(s) of coordination which would be of mutual benefit. The nascent GCC organisation was intended, according to the description of the first Secretary General, Abdullah Bishara, to enable the participating units to coordinate their policies in the face of rising regional and global uncertainties. He asserted that the GCC did not represent an alliance or threat against a specific bloc or nation, and it was hoped that, by enhancing and strengthening cooperation among its members, the Gulf region would both enjoy peace and be able to promote international and regional order (Bishara, 1982).

Both parties to the Iran/Iraq war did their level best to drag the various Gulf states into the conflict either through direct threats or more specifically through threats to the stability of navigation in the region (see also Obied, 1996). The Iranian regime threatened the Gulf states who supported Iraq. Those Gulf states that sided with Iraq in its war against Iran, mainly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, were in fact 'forced' to do so by Iraq; it seems that, with hindsight, a refusal to support Iraq would have meant that the invasion of Kuwait would have taken place even earlier than August 1990. The role of the Iran/Iraq war could thus be seen as one of the most important motivating factors in the emergence of the GCC (for more of discussion of the role of Iran/Iraq war see chapter 8, 9, and 11).

The Soviet Union threat: The USSR has tried to establish and maintain a presence in the Arabian Gulf through influence and leverage in the socialist-inclined states of Iran, Iraq, and South Yemen. Ramazani (1979) alleges that since the early 1960s, the USSR sought to increase its influence in the region via support for national liberation movements and socialist-inclined governments. The Soviet Union used its economic leverage with South Yemen (to whom it was also giving military aid) as part of its policy of rapprochement within the region. Yet, as Rammazani (1979) argued, the Soviet Union's policy of rapprochement failed within the conservative Gulf states of Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE.



The USSR's influence first appeared in the Gulf region when the Iraqi regime signed a Treaty of Friendship with it in 1972. The treaty included also an economic agreement in which the USSR would be able to exploit the oil wealth from the 'North Rumailah' oil field in the south of Iraq. The Soviet Union hoped that the rapprochement with Iraq would give them a Middle-East platform to project its anti-Western propaganda in the Gulf. However, their expectations were not to materialise, though the Iraqi rapprochement with the Soviet Union did create a situation of alarm among the Gulf states. The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, which was driven according to many (see, e.g., Page, 1979) by the need to gain access to the Gulf, intensified fear among the Gulf states. The Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan met with strong condemnation from all the Moslem states, with the exception of the socialist regimes in Libya, South Yemen, and Syria. The Gulf states, first among the Moslem countries to protest and condemn the invasion, stipulated a full and an unconditional withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan before any sort of relations could be re-established.

The Brezhnev Peace Plan, proposed by the Soviet Premier Brezhnev in December, 1980 during a visit to India, was completely rejected by the Gulf states. The Soviet plan called for a halt to any military bases or interference, and any use of force in search of some form of a hegemony in the Gulf region, in addition to the total respect for the sovereignty of each of the Gulf states (Kusnetsov 1981).

The Gulf states rejected the Soviet proposal and insisted on a full withdrawal from Afghanistan prior to re-initiating any diplomatic relationships with the Soviet Union (see Page (1979) for similar point). The Soviet Union's support of the Dhofar Liberation movement in Oman, viewed by the Gulf states as socialist-inclined, ruled out any sort of diplomatic links between the Gulf states and USSR and increased their fear of the Soviet threat during the 1970s. The exacerbation of the situation in Afghanistan heightened the small Gulf states' concern for stability and the need for cooperation to ensure internal and external security, (see also al-Alkim (1994)). To the Gulf states, the Soviet Union's threat was an important and concrete external threat.



The Israeli Problem: In his discussion of the Israeli threat to the Gulf states, two aspects which have had direct bearing on the formation of the GCC - the Arab-Israeli conflict and the major security and stability challenges it has posed and continues to pose for the region; and, the Israeli attack on the Iraqi nuclear facility at Osirak, near Baghdad, on June 7, 1981 (Kechichian 1985). This demonstrated the threat to security in the Gulf region and the vulnerability of most Gulf states to possible Israeli aggression. The Gulf states, much like the rest of the Arab countries, endorsed the Palestinians' cause and called for a full resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some analysts have argued that the Gulf states took the possibility of an invasion from Israel seriously, especially after the Israeli attack on the nuclear facility in Iraq (Kechichian 1985).

Though an Israeli Invasion of any of the Gulf states was unlikely, the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon affirmed their fear of Israel's intentions, and increased the level of confrontation in the Middle East region. The Israeli actions not only increased the Gulf states' fears, but, more importantly, highlighted the weakness of the Arab states in repelling any such threat. The attack on the Iraqi nuclear facility also raised doubts on the political and military leverage and efficacy of the Arab League. The United States, a major ally to Israel, vetoed the United Nations' adoption of Resolution 242 calling for the withdrawal of Israel from Arab territories annexed following the 1968 Arab-Israeli war. The US and generally the West's advocacy of Israel provided the GCC states with one more reason for pursuing regional cooperation in order to secure their own political stability and survival. The role of the Israeli threat in the formation of the GCC might thus not be the most important factor, but, no doubt, was significant.

### **5.5 The New World Order and Its Important in the Gulf Region:**

The collapse of the USSR in 1989 signalled the arrival of a new world era dominated by one superpower. The most striking feature of the new world order is



the emergence of the US as the dominant power in the world. The USA stood as the only power capable and willing to deploy a substantial military presence in the Gulf region in the event of external aggression (Bryen and Noble 1991). According to Freedman and Karsh (1992), such late 1970s and 1980s events as the Afghan war, Iranian revolution, Iran-Iraq war, Israeli invasion of South Lebanon and *Intifada* eruption in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, were some of the ramifications of the new world order in the Middle East.

As part of its efforts to instate a new order in the world, the US, as the lone military and economic superpower in the world and the dominant force in international diplomacy, tried to settle the unresolved national and regional issues and problems. Bryen and Noble (1991) alleged that, in the aim of asserting and consolidating its hegemony in the Gulf region, the US manoeuvred hard to prevent any other power, including Russia, from any active involvement in the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Gulf Crisis: The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and the annexation of Kuwait to Iraq caused a major change in the Arab countries inter-relations as well as a major split among them. Iraq alleged that Kuwait was historically part of Iraq (its 19th province) and, to that extent, Kuwait had no legitimate claim to independent sovereignty. The Iraqi annexation of Kuwait was met with near universal condemnation from the rest of the world, if only because the annexation of Kuwait would mean that it would have control over massive oil reserves and, inevitably, control over oil prices, threatening thereby the interests of the world's nations, especially the West (see al-Saquar (1995)).

The Iraqi government aims were not only to seize Kuwait but also, in the longer term, to undermine the political stability of the rest of the countries of the Gulf. The United States, in its reaction to the Iraqi invasion and in an attempt to restore the status quo in the region, took the lead against the Iraqi aggression. As a result of the threat to its own and the West's interests in the Gulf created by the invasion, the US called for an alliance of Western powers and anti-Iraqi invasion Arab countries to



repel the Iraqi aggression. In its turn, the Iraqi government's media reacted angrily calling for an Islamic alliance against the international coalition led by the USA. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, however, failed to draw any significant support within the Arab world (Falah (1993)). Also, US military intervention in the region was fundamentally motivated by the need to ensure control over the oil reserves in the Gulf remained in the hands of Pro-American regimes. While it is true that the US intervention in the Gulf crisis was driven by considerations of interests, it is equally true that such an intervention took place only after the Arab League failed to find a solution to the crisis. The inability of the GCC countries in countering the might of Iraqi army left the GCC states with no choice but request foreign help to repel the aggression of Saddam's regime (see also Cordesman (1993) for a similar argument).

In an attempt to rally Arab support for its invasion of Kuwait, the Iraqi regime resorted to a number of strategies. First, the Iraqi regime sought to split the Arab countries by tying the Kuwaiti crisis with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict proposing that the Iraqi army would immediately withdraw from Kuwait if Israel were to withdraw from the occupied territories. Second, the Iraqi president called for a fairer distribution of the wealth accruing from the oil between the Arab countries. Though Saddam's call was met with some sympathy among the poorer Arab countries, the Iraqi tactics failed miserably (Kemp (1991)). It is not difficult to see why the Iraqi tactics to split the Arab world did not come to any fruition. Iraq's claim that the presence of Western troops on Saudi soil constituted an act of desecration of the two holy places of Mecca and Madina, a tactic adopted with the aim of inflaming anti-Western sentiment among the Moslem population at large against the allies, did not trigger any response among Arabs and Moslems for the obvious reason that Western and foreign troops were stationed along the Saudi-Kuwaiti borders, far removed from the holy sites. Falah (1993) argues that the US military presence will continue to exist in the Gulf, and in the Arabian Peninsula, in particular, well into the next century. The continued threat to US interests of a hostile regime in Tehran ensures that the US is likely to continue to maintain a significant military presence in the Gulf.



In part the continued instability of the Gulf region is due to the West's policy. The West was unwilling to depose Saddam Hussein from power so that as the 'crisis' of late 1997 (arising from denying access to the UN to Royal Palaces in Iraq) showed, he is able to play off the Western allies at the expense of the United States. Yet, to have deposed Saddam Hussein in 1990 would have opened the way for Iran to encourage and support pro-Iranian Shi'ites to assume power. Clearly, a pro-Iranian Iraq would have a further destabilising effect on the GCC member states. Also, the deposing of Saddam Hussein would open the way for Syria to assume a more dominant role, creating in turn a threat not only for the GCC member states but for Israel as well. The changing of the status quo could lead to an alliance of Syria and Iran which would affect the political stability the Gulf region and threaten the West's interests. As argued by Falah (1993), by retaining Saddam in power, protection pacts could be signed with the many Gulf states, and such 'rogue' states as Iran and Syria would be deprived of gaining any political advantages.

The Gulf crisis was the event which fragmented the Arab world and split the Arab order into two camps: Iraq's allies including Jordan, Sudan, Algeria, and Yemen, and the GCC allies including Egypt and Syria. The fragmentation of the Arab world led inevitably to hostility between many of the Arab world countries. The Gulf crisis has created lasting political, economic, (and environmental) problems for both camps and as part of the new world order - as well as outcome of it - has had a significant political impact on the GCC.

The Peace Process: The prospects for peace in the Middle East prior to the advent of the new world order, and especially before the Gulf crisis, were in an impasse. However, it is arguable at least that the Gulf crisis changed the aggressive mood which characterised the politics of the region and was contributory to a new era of peace-making in the region.

A lasting Arab-Israeli peace, in general, and a permanent resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in particular, were first approached during secret negotiations in Oslo. Peace in the Middle East and rapprochement between the two



hostile parties, the Arabs and the Israelis, was one of the major ramifications of the new world order. The peace process aimed to generate and ensure both stability and security in the Middle East, including the Gulf region. The influential role of the US as a superpower in resolving regional conflicts crystallised in the peace process. Both Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) were pushed by the US to settle their disputes and seek a lasting settlement of their conflict. Thus, in September 1993, the head of PLO and the Israeli Prime minister signed a peace agreement in Washington to end the hostilities and conflict between the two nations.

The GCC encourage the peace process and endorsed the agreements signed between the PLO and Israel and between Jordan and Israel even though both Jordan and PLO sided with Iraq during the Gulf crisis. For the GCC, peace between the Arabs and Israelis was a welcome development as they had always thought of Israel as a threat to their stability and security, (see al-Alkim (1994). The GCC support for the peace agreement and the peace process took the form of economic aid to the Palestinians and such member states as Qatar and Oman opening diplomatic relations with the state of Israel. The GCC sought from its support for the peace agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis an end to the Israeli threat and a lasting peace in the Gulf area. Yet, by the latter half of the 1990s, following the election of the Right to power in Israel, the peace process seems all but stalled.

## **5.6 Overview:**

Throughout the cold war era, the two major superpowers shaped the world order and their rivalry and ideological conflict dominated international relations and determined the conditions within which other countries of international community formulated their foreign policies and defined economic policies and objectives. Recently, however, the bipolar structure of capitalist West versus socialist East that characterised the world order of the cold war era collapsed, giving way to the a new old order and a new balance of global power. The old world order, dominated by two superpowers, was replaced by a new world order in which the United States reigns



supreme as the undisputed military superpower and the strongest economy in the world.

This chapter examined how Gulf political geography in general and the GCC in particular evolved in the political and economic contexts of both the old world order and the new world order. Historically, the roots of the GCC lies in the foundations laid by the British and their withdrawal, but it was regional crisis that were to be instrumental to its formation. These crisis evolved against the changing backdrop of post- 1945 international relations. The role of political and economic conditions associated with both the old and the new world orders in the creation of the GCC will be taken up again in later chapters where an attempt will be made to examine the perceived role and importance of these conditions among both Gulf citizens and Gulf political elites.



## **The Role of Tribalism & Arab Nationalism in the GCC's Establishment and Performance**

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### **6.1 Introduction:**

**T**his chapter examines the two related socio-political phenomena of tribalism and Arab nationalism in the context of the Gulf states before and after the 1980s, and particularly in the role they have played leading to the emergence of the GCC and its subsequent performance. The chapter starts with a definition of the notion of the 'state' in the context of the Gulf states. The meanings of 'tribalism' and 'Arab nationalism' are discussed and the various factors promoting the persistence of them will be considered in section 6.2. The key question as to the bearing of these factors on the creation and working of the GCC will be addressed the penultimate section.

The Gulf states have generally been described as 'rudimentary' sheikhdoms, partly because of the importance tribal relations have had traditionally in the littoral states. They continue to be viewed as “Bedouin” or tribal societies even after the transformations that Gulf society has witnessed following the oil boom (see among others Gause, 1994).

The ideology of Arab nationalism which swept through the Arab world in the twentieth century affected the Gulf though not as much as elsewhere. Halliday (1980) argues that, though the Gulf rulers were alarmed by the kind of Arab nationalism that was advocated by Nasserist Egypt and local opposition political groups within the Gulf favouring one or other version of Arab nationalism, the Gulf region remained politically removed from the rise of the Pan-Arabist ideology. El-Rayyes (1988)



contends that the creation of the GCC was born out of the perceived needs of the ruling elites of member states to forge a regional alliance that would allow them to overcome the emergence of such opposition forces and their realisation that they would have to form some kind of political union. The establishment of the GCC was in this sense a response to the danger that the increasingly influential ideology of Arab nationalism posed for the small conservative states of the Gulf.

## **6.2 Definition & Nature of the State in the Context of the Gulf:**

Definitions of the concept 'state' vary, however, the concept has in general been interpreted as denoting the set of political institutions which have both power and sovereignty over a certain territory (Evans, 1985). Accordingly, the concept of the state involves two major components or functions; a functional role - the functions of the state - and an operational role - the process whereby the state operates. At the core of the 'state' are thus two conceptual elements: power, defined as the ability to govern, and sovereignty, defined as the ability of the state to legitimately protect its territory and exercise authority within such a territory (Riyadha, 1992, pp. 14-15).

Harik (1990) categorised the Arab states into five types: (1) The Imam-Chief: Power in this type of system is centred in the hands of a sanctified person. Pre-1970 Oman, Cyrenaica (Libya), among others, exemplify this category of state. (2) The alliance of chiefs and Imams: Power is divided between the tribal chief and the religious leader. This second category of Arab states is best exemplified by Saudi Arabia. (3) Traditional Secular: Authority is inherited within a certain family or dynasty. Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE are among the more obvious examples of this states. (4) Bureaucratic-Military Oligarchies: Power is centred in the hands of certain urban-based military or military-backed leaders, as in Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Finally, (5) The colonially-created State system: the consequence of the colonial powers carving out a new state from the Ottoman empire to preserve imperial



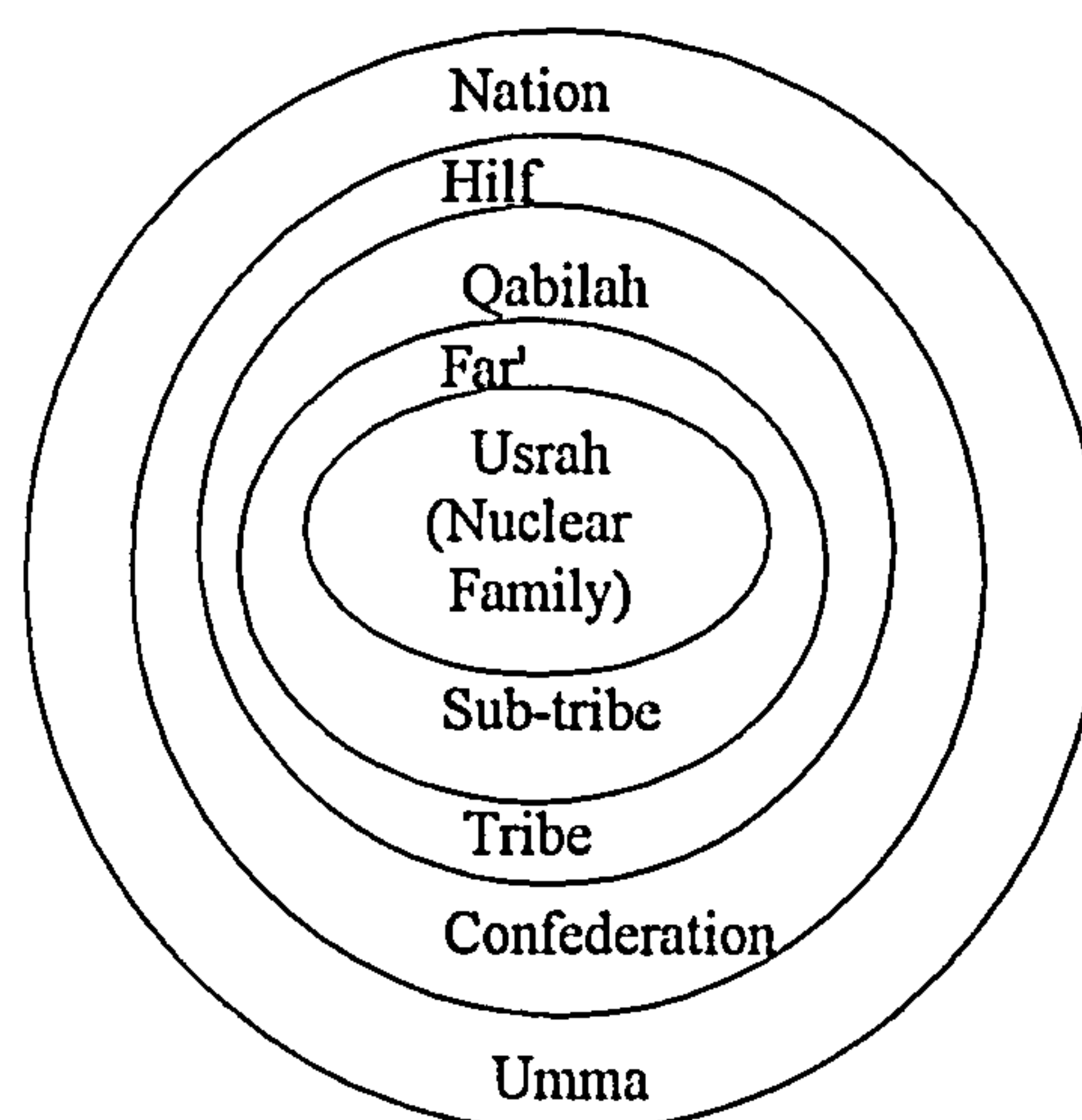
interests. Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria exemplify this type of state system (Harik (1990)).

In Harik's classificatory system, the GCC member states are all monarchical systems, with political power essentially concentrated in the hands of a dynastic family. This helps define the similarities which characterise the Gulf states. Drawing attention to these and wider similarities which exist among the littoral Gulf states, Christie (1987) wrote “[t]here is the common language- Arabic, a common religion- Islam, closely comparable social structures, roughly the same standards of economic development, and very similar systems of government, [...] [emphasis added]”, (p.7). The 'closely comparable social structures' of the Gulf states is due, in part, to the fact that most of the Gulf tribes straddle two or more state territories.

### 6.3 Tribalism & Arab Nationalism:

Tribalism, as a socio-cultural phenomenon, has been understood as a way of social life and a type of societal organisation grounded in certain norms and habits, most especially the custom of nomadism (pastoralism). Peterson (1977) notes that at the root of tribalism in the Gulf is the phenomenon of the *Badu* population (nomads). Gause (1994) saw both tribalism and Islam as forms of “traditionalism” which ultimately created the basis of politics in the Gulf states. According to Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), the tribe or “*Qabilah*” is one of the multi-strata accounting for the social and political hierarchy at the heart of the Bedouin society. The nature of this hierarchy is illustrated in Figure (6.1):



**Figure 6.1 The Social & Political Structure of the Bedouin Society**

Source: Ibn Khaldun

In the context of the Arab states, the concept of 'Nation' is deeply rooted and derives much of its significance from the Islamic principle of '*Umma*'. Islam sought to unify the various hostile Arab tribes of the Pre-Islamic Arab peninsula under one Muslim state, what the Islamic Scriptures refer to as the 'Umma' (Muslim Nation). Thus, the '*Umma*' is a wider concept that encompasses or subsumes both sub-tribal and supra-tribal divisions as well as other hierarchical social and political structures.

Tribes exercise power over the territories they control. The Gulf states differ as to how one or other major tribe came to seize power and establish political dominance within a given state. The dynasty ruling Saudi Arabia captured power through force. Political power in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar was achieved via trade and trade power (Crystal, 1995). Political power in UAE was the culmination of an alliance between several tribes, while religious leadership was at the basis of the political system in the littoral state of Oman. Al-Iyobi (1992) asserts that tribal relations and alliances have dominated the basis of the political life since the advent of the modern Gulf states (see also Peterson (1977), Crystal (1994), Nawwar (1993), and others). Nawwar (1993) affirms that the emergence of the new Gulf Sheikdoms



saw the equal emergence and consolidation of the new ruling family system in the Gulf.

Central to the tribal system and customs are two concepts: the *Majlis* and the *Shoura*. The *Majlis*, the public session presided over by the ruler, is held so as to listen to the people's grievances. Townsend (1992) describes the role of the tribal '*majlis*' as an informal gathering, usually held in the evening and attended by men seeking to make a comment or a request or voice a complaint (p. 372). The *Shoura*, a concept rooted in the political system of Islam, is the process of consultation with tribal or community elites. "*Ussabiyah*" or tribal affinity is one of the key elements of tribalism. Barakat (1994) asserts that '*Ussabiyah*' stands at the heart of tribalism and plays a major role in its existence. One manifestation of "*Ussabiyah*" is tribal affinity; in effect, "*Ussabiyah*" can be understood as tribal politics. The political hierarchy of the tribal system comprised many strata. At the apex of the pyramid stands the Sheikh or the "*Amir*" whose power came from his wealth and/or his dynastic roots in the tribe. The tribal *majlis* constitutes the second most powerful authority within the tribal hierarchy. Members of such *majlis*, the distinguished among the tribe, acquire their positions by virtue of their socio-economic power and influence within the tribe.

Arab Nationalism refers to an ideology based on a mixture of political and social motivations to create a distinctive homeland. Kohn (1975) defines nationalism as a political creed that underlies the cohesion of modern societies and legitimises the claim to authority. A great deal of literature focuses on the relation between the two concepts of nation-state and nationalism.

The rise of the ideology of Arab nationalism -i.e. the movement that came to be known as Pan-Arabism- in the Arab world is largely a twentieth century phenomenon. Anderson (1983) contends that central to nationalism are two essential components, the spread of language and dominance of culture. El-Rayyes (1988) singles out the cultural, linguistic, poetic, religious, emotional and tribal aspects of the Arab society as the main components of Arab nationalism. Language is a critical factor in underpinning nationalism and, equally, a key component of tribalism and



most especially the '*Ussabiyah*'. A vital prerequisite in the rise of both ideologies is the existence of cultural similarities. Territoriality is a third component shared by tribalism and nationalism.

Though the two ideologies of tribalism and Pan-Arabism differ in terms of central principles, both were part of the socio-political scenery against which the Gulf states and politics must be understood. Tribalism, however, has always and remains stronger than Arab nationalism owing to the history of the Gulf societies.

#### **6.4 Significance of Tribalism & Arab Nationalism in the Gulf:**

Prior to the discovery of oil the relationships between the two major categories of society within the Gulf states - the Bedouin and sedentary populations - had been affected as a result of the major politico-economic developments that the region had witnessed. Yet, it was the massive economic developments that took place in the GCC states as a result of the discovery of oil in the region that widened the gap between the urban (the *hader*) and the Bedouins populations, the former benefiting disproportionately from the newly acquired wealth (Hopkins, 1989).

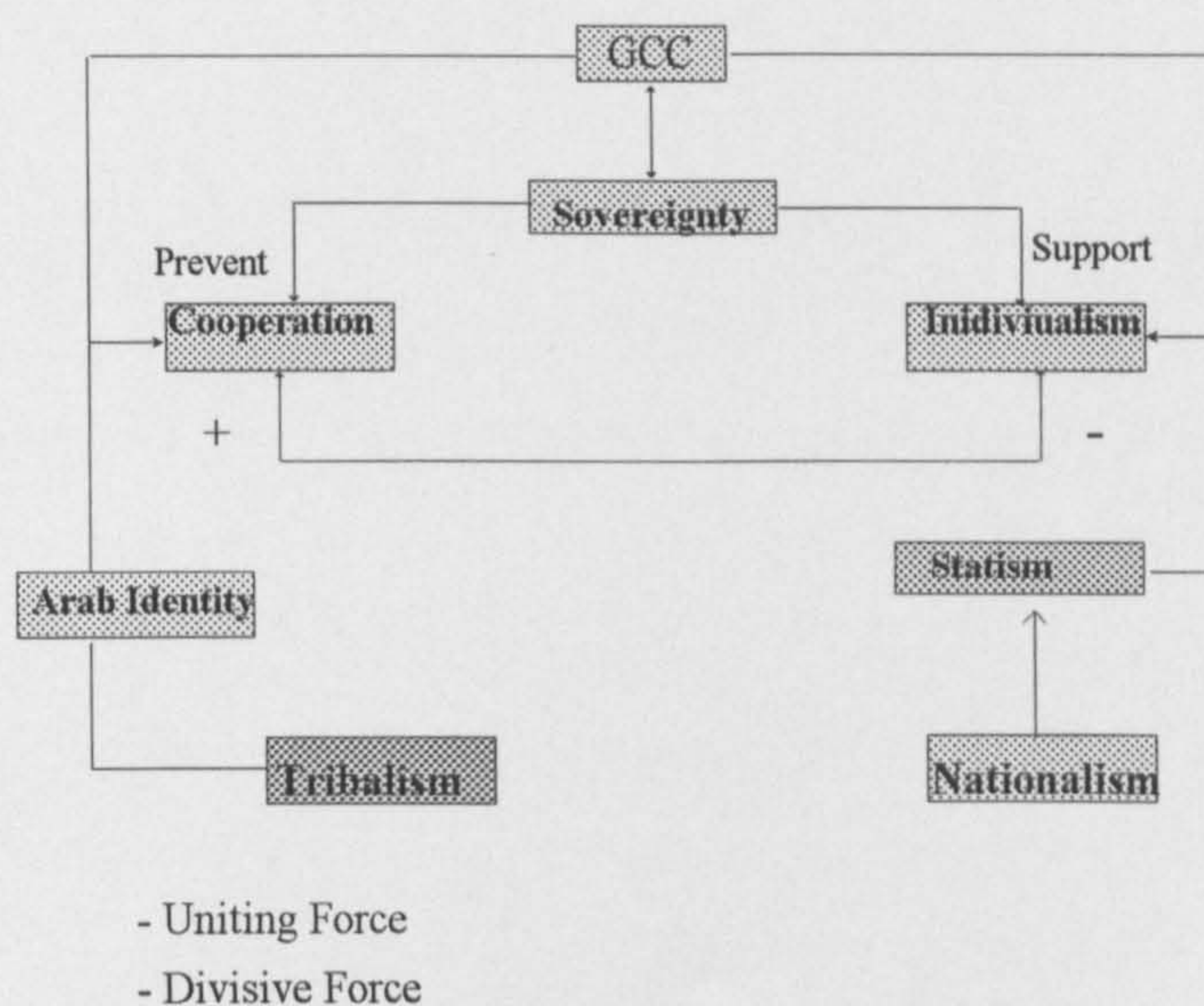
The Gulf states were affected by the storm of Arab nationalist movements which swept the Arab world during the late sixties and early seventies. Ramadan (1993) alleges that the rise of regionalism in the Gulf, culminating in the creation of the GCC, was a consequence of the failed ideology of 'Pan-Arabism' and a subsequent return to *statism* and parochial nationalism. The rise of Arab nationalism and the influence of Pan-Arabist movements in the Gulf states before and after the creation of the GCC remained quite limited owing, in part, to the high levels of illiteracy among the populations of the Gulf states. This prevailing illiteracy did not, however, preclude the spread of nationalism.



The ruling elites in the then relatively new Gulf states were apprehensive of Arab nationalism and the philosophy that it represented. The movement of Arab nationalism, whose leaders were mostly intellectuals from lower class origins, was opposed to the existence of the newly established sheikhdoms, dismissing them as no more than a creation of the British colonial power. In the present-day Gulf states, Arab nationalism has all but disappeared as an active or influential ideology, to be replaced by the more vociferous and parochial 'nationalisms' of the Gulf states. The threat of strident nationalism for the regional alliance of the GCC has come from member states in the form of intransigent '*statism*'. Fuelled by the intractable question of sovereignty, statism has been hindered and continues to hinder, the progress of the GCC, serving as a divisive force, and standing in the way of greater cooperation among the GCC member states and the integration of their political, economic and social institutions.

Tribalism, on the other hand, has been a uniting factor among the GCC states. The similarity of tribal systems and the close historical and blood ties among the various Gulf tribes assists rapprochement between the GCC member states and have facilitated inter-state cooperation among them (Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2 The Roles of Tribalism and Nation-Statism in the GCC:**





The Gulf tribes and the continuity of the tribal system in this region have benefited the political regimes of the GCC states in a distinctive way, in effect, the Gulf regimes have recognised that support of tribal affinities could be a means of perpetuating the political status quo. Tribalism can be used directly in supporting the states. Hameed (1986) argues that though there is a culturally-based disdain among Bedouin recruits for military service, Gulf rulers have continually shown preference for recruiting armies from the Bedouin populations of Gulf society. Unlike the skilled urban and 'modernised' populations, known to have weaker loyalties often to the leadership, tribes are known for their loyalty to the sheikhs. To an extent, the relation between the two is based on mutual interests and benefits; the ruling families rely on tribes and tribal systems to preserve the status quo while the Bedouin are able to preserve and protect their interests through their representatives in the armed and security forces. The *modus vivendi* between tribes and ruling families has been disrupted by the development of oil economies. The part played by the tribe in socio-political organisation has been increasingly taken over by modern government institutions, leading to a gradual weakening of the historically long relation between political organisation and the tribes (Abir, 1979).

Arab Nationalism did bring to bear considerable external pressures on the Gulf states. Zahlan (1989) asserts that the Palestine problem and Nasser's Pan-Arab policies had a considerable influence on the internal politics of Kuwait and Bahrain. During the 1960s and 1970s Bahrain and Kuwait the only two Gulf states to have numerous political parties as well as an elected parliament. Also, the close relationship that Saudi Arabia fostered with the US has been interpreted as in part the result of the aim of the ruling monarchy to break away from the influence Nasserist Egypt (Zahlan, 1989). The shift towards the US resulted from the threat to monarchical rule inherent in the Egyptian revolution and its call for Arab socialism.

The diffusion of Arab nationalism in the Gulf states has been extensively discussed, most of the literature agreeing that Arab nationalist movements appeared relatively late in the Gulf. Bahrain was the first of the Gulf states to see the emergence



of an important Arab nationalist movement in the late 1960s. The spread of Pan-Arabist ideology to Bahrain and some of the other Gulf states, particularly Kuwait, was largely due to the significant inroads education was making in this part of the Gulf. Another factor was the spread of foreign newspapers (e.g. newspapers from Egypt and Lebanon), while in Kuwait the influence of Arab nationalism increased as a consequence of Nasser's direct encouragement of the Kuwaitis to become more involved in Arab affairs (see among others el-Rayyes, 1988).

In fact Pan-Arabism had relatively little effect in the Gulf for a number of reasons. First, Arab nationalism came under close scrutiny by the Gulf governments and lost much of its appeal after the collapse of the Egypt-Syria union and even more so after the defeat of the Pan-Arab regimes' in the 1967 war. Peterson (1988) asserts that the Arab defeat in June 1967 war signalled the failure of Nasserism and marked, on the one hand, the decline of the Pan-Arabist ideology and, on the other, the rise of the Islamists. Second, 'front-line states' (i.e. the Pan-Arabist regimes) crucially relied on the Gulf states for funds. Thus, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia provided funds to Egypt, Syria, and Jordan while Qatar and the UAE too began funding Syria and Egypt in 1973 (el-Rayyes, 1988). The Gulf states' bankrolling of the 'front-line states' was done in an attempt to placate these Pan-Arabist regimes and, thus, was one way of protecting the stability of their own conservative monarchical regimes. Yet, Arab nationalism sought to overthrow the Gulf regimes. Abir (1979) asserts that in 1960 Egypt adopted a "unity of purpose" ideology and became dedicated to the overthrow of all Arab regimes whose rulers and system of government impeded the progress of Arab unity. Third, there was a growing perception among Gulf citizens that the Pan-Arabist regimes sought to gain control over all sources of energy in the region and that its leaders were intent on governing in an authoritarian and anti-democratic manner in the Arab world.

Since its inception, Arab nationalism has had a number of implications for the Gulf states. In pre-independence days the ideals of the movement were designed to cause unrest and encourage the overthrow of the colonial powers in the littoral Gulf states. Also, Arab nationalist ideology sought to reduce and ultimately eliminate the



gap between the poor and the rich Arab countries through control of oil revenues, an ideology to which the Gulf governments were entirely opposed (el-Rayyes (1988)). According to Abdul-Dime (1992), Arab nationalism rejected internationalism bent on economic hegemony and the fanaticism of ethnicity and sought, instead, human cooperation on an international scale. At the regional level, Arab nationalism pursued Arab integration in the form of either confederations or federations. Yet, if Pan-Arabism was seeking to establish Arab unity this was unlikely to materialise owing to the irreconcilable ideological differences between the Gulf states and the front-line regimes advocating Arab nationalism, in particular Egypt, Syria.

The GCC was established in an attempt to overcome the internal and the external threats they faced and continue to face. By creating the GCC, these states aimed to create a new identity for themselves but without isolating themselves from the Arab nation. Yet, by establishing a regional alliance in the form of the GCC, the member states had isolated themselves from the Arab environment and planted the seeds of a restricted Gulf (*Khalij*) identity, Kechichian (1985). As Sa'id and Abdul-Jouwad (1989) argue the creation of GCC has resulted in the centre of policy-making in the Arab world focusing on Riyadh and the other littoral Gulf States.

### 6.5 Overview:

The role of Arab nationalism and of Pan-Arabist ideology in the establishment of the GCC was limited for a number of reasons. Clearly, the revolutionary ideals of such Arab nationalist states as Egypt, Syria and Libya was found unacceptable by the conservative political systems of the Gulf. As el-Rayyes (1988: p.84) asserts the Gulf states governments have found in 'balkanisation' a haven for their privileged oil revenues, resisting any attempt at Arab unity which might threaten to dilute their newly-found wealth. Arab nationalism too was seen by the Saudi political establishment as anathema to Islam and the concept of an Islamic nation (p. 93). Yet,



if the political regimes of the Gulf states opposed Arab nationalism and its ideals, that did not, however, preclude the spread of this ideology among Gulf citizens.

The role that tribalism has played in the creation of the GCC, on the other hand, was far from minimal. Strong tribal affinities existing among the various Gulf states acted as one of the major factors that facilitated the creation of the GCC. Yet, the impact of tribes and tribalism on the political life in the Gulf states has been gradually diminishing because of the growing gap emerging between the political regimes and the tribes; the consultative councils established by governments throughout the Gulf states have taken over most of the functions previously in the hands of tribal councils and authorities.



## **Research Methodology**

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### **7.1 Introduction:**

A primary objective of this research is to examine perceptions of the GCC, the structure of the organisation, its functioning, including how it formulates and implements common policies, and, in the light of such perceptions explore whether there is a social and political basis for federalism in the Gulf. These perceptions are drawn from two sample surveys, one of top-ranking officials at the GCC Secretariat General, the other from Gulf citizens, specifically students at the University of Qatar in Doha (State of Qatar) and Kuwait University in Kuwait City (State of Kuwait).

Elite and citizen perceptions of the GCC will be examined with the aim of highlighting the level of satisfaction with the organisation among the two samples. Their perceptions will also be explored with a view to illuminating the degree, nature, and type of cooperation existing among the member states of this organisation. In light of these perceptions, the study also evaluates the actual achievements of, and problems confronting, the GCC.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the manner in which the data was collected, the problems arising from the nature of the data, the strategy used in drawing the political elite and citizens samples, and the types of methods employed to obtain data from both types of samples.



## **7.2 Research Design:**

### **7.2.1. Methods of Data Collection:**

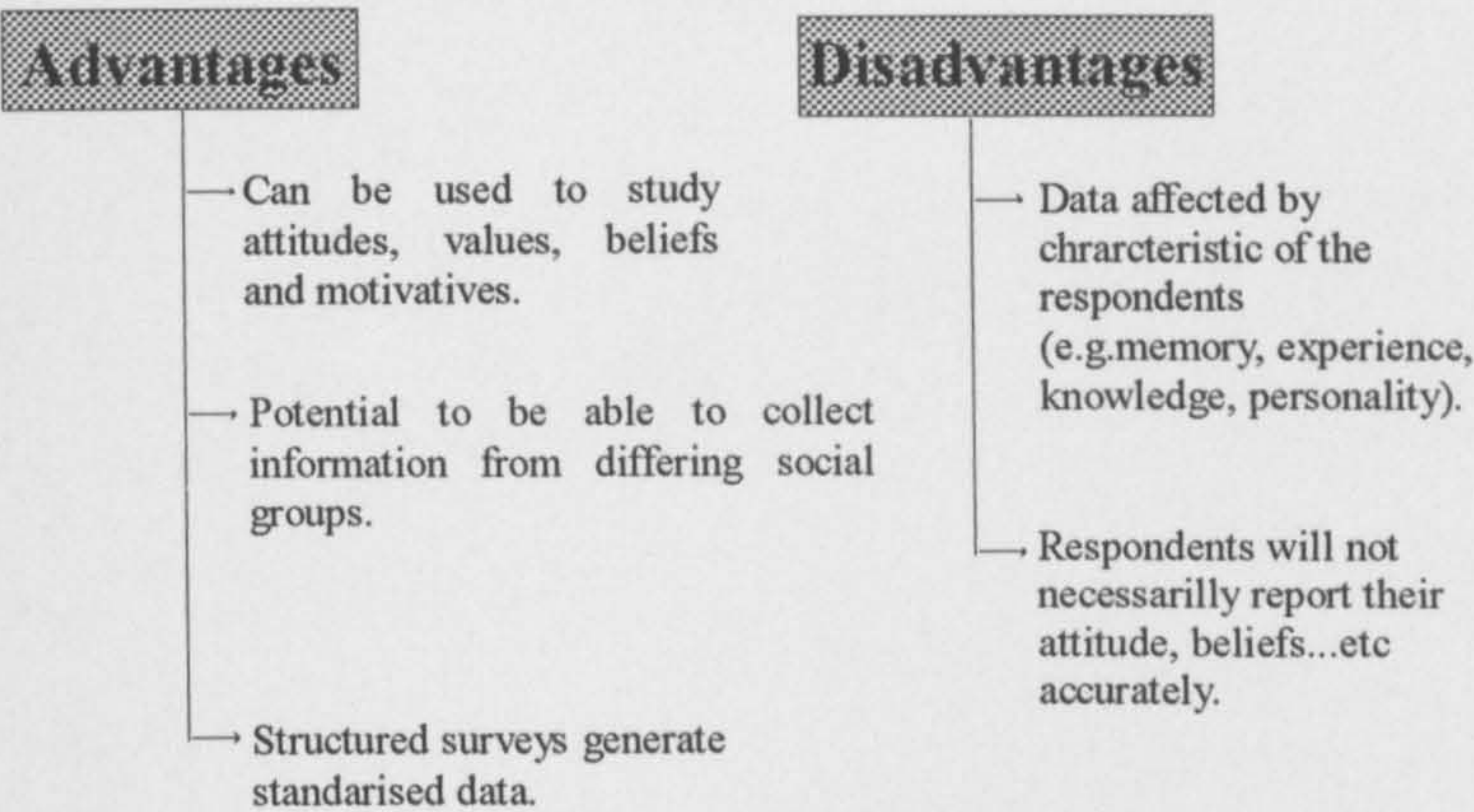
Several types of research strategy were exploited to collect the relevant data. Basic reliance was placed on the use of the questionnaire method. The primary data obtained through the use of a questionnaire was supplemented with interviews conducted among key personnel at the GCC Secretariat General, and the use of secondary sources including GCC documents and reports, together with newspapers and other material.

The design of this study integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods to the study of how the GCC is imagined. A synthesis of both approaches was deemed appropriate for several reasons. The nature of the research objectives required selectivity with regard to both information and sample type. In connection with the selectivity of the information required, the questionnaire had to be designed and interviews conducted carefully so as to target relevant types of data. As to the sample selection, the study needed to target high-ranking GCC officials, and in particular those concerned with policy and decision-making within the institutions of the GCC. Needless to say, only such a sample could provide the study with the pertinent information needed to carry out an evaluation of the different aspects of the GCC institution. The use of a questionnaire permits the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data that can be used to either corroborate (or negate) assumptions and data derived from the secondary sources.

As is widely accepted the use of questionnaires and interviewing has both advantages and disadvantages, (Figure 7.1):



**Figure 7.1 The Main Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaire and Interview- Based Surveys**



Source: Robson, C. (1993, p.128)

**Sampling the Political Elite:**

***A. On Use and Nature of Questionnaire***

The reason for questioning GCC officials is to understand their perceptions of the various reasons, either regional or international, underlying the establishment of the GCC, their reactions to an assembled list of factors bearing on the creation of the organisation derived from the general literature, and their understanding of the GCC’s objectives, policies, problems, achievements, and levels of cooperation among its member states in various political, economic, social, and environmental fields.

To elicit the perceptions of the GCC officials sample investigated in this work, a questionnaire was designed and submitted to the sample in question (see Appendix (A)). The questionnaire submitted to the GCC officials sought, in one instance, the sample’s opinions on the various factors motivating the creation of the GCC. The sample was, in particular, asked to identify what they deem to be (a) regional factors (i.e., considerations local to the Gulf area) and/or (b) international factors (i.e., extra-regional) behind the emergence of the GCC. The sample was, in particular, asked to react to a set of suggested factors by ranking them on a four point Likert scale ranging



from very important to least important and to the set of external factors by ranking them on a scale of importance ranging from 1 for most important to 4 for least important.

A second part of the questionnaire explores the respondents' perceptions of the GCC functions and functioning. This particular part of the questionnaire involved three broad questions relating to the aims of the GCC, the problems hindering the realisation of the GCC objectives, and the achievements realised by the organisation to date.

The third and final part of the questionnaire deals with perceptions of the level of cooperation among the GCC member states in different policy fields. These include cooperation on international foreign policies (e.g., policies towards the US as a major superpower; those relating to oil production; and those towards Russia/CIS), regional foreign policies (e.g., a common security policy, the Arabo-Israeli question; the Iranian threat, etc.), and internal GCC policies. The latter include harmonisation of member states' foreign policies towards such regional groupings as the EU; cooperation in the area of social policy (i.e., health, education), and economic and environmental policies (e.g., Common Tariffs, environment protection, etc.).

As noted above, a prime objective of the questionnaire was to explore the political elite's perceptions of the structure of the GCC, its functioning, formulation of policies and levels of cooperation among the member states of this institution. To obtain such data, the questionnaire needed to incorporate both 'open' and 'closed' questions. Open-ended questions, accounted for the majority of information gathered from the key officials in the GCC Secretariat General. Data bearing on such questions as aims, problems, and achievements of the GCC as well as the various factors motivating its establishment are best obtained and explored through the use of open-ended questions.

Closed questions were employed to arrive at the sample's perceptions of a list of GCC policies and the reasons for the creation of the institution. The list of policies



and reasons in question was compiled by the researcher from secondary sources, mainly background literature. With regard to GCC's common policies, informants were required to evaluate the level of cooperation among the member states by ranking a set of listed common policies on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (very little cooperation) to 3 (considerable cooperation) (see for example figure 8.5). As regards the reasons leading to the emergence of this regional grouping, the sample was asked to assess a proposed list of internal factors by ranking their perceived importance on a Likert scale going from 1 (for very important) to 4 (for least important) and a second list of external factors by ranking their perceived importance in the emergence of the GCC on also a Likert scale ranging from 1 (for most important) to 4 (least important).

Closed questions differ from open-ended ones in that they restrict the sample's responses to predetermined options, and are to that extent 'easier' to respond to (see, among others, Robson 1993, Arber 1993). A further advantage of the closed question is the ease it offers to respondents in the filling of the questionnaire. Further, this type of question is more necessary when investigating a sample like the one targeted here (i.e. top-ranking officials in the GCC), who have little time to spare and are extremely difficult to gain access to. The disadvantage of the closed question is that it may channel respondents to giving particular answers.

In his discussion of the role and importance of open-ended questions in the gathering of data, Robson (1993) notes that "[p]ilot work using interviews and open-ended questions can provide suggestions for closed alternatives. Another possibility is to have some open-ended questions in the self-administered questionnaire, and to have respondents classify their own open-ended responses using provided categories (e.g., as 'very positive', 'positive', etc.)." (p. 243). It follows from this that open-ended questions can not only be used to obtain information and insights which the researcher can build on to devise a closed set of questions, but can also be utilised to obtain categorical responses by requesting the sample to rank their responses in terms of a defined scale or set of provided options. These advantages of open-ended questions were exploited in the gathering of the data analysed in this study, in that the data and information obtained from a first questionnaire administered to the GCC political elite



(elite sample) and using open-ended questions were benefited from and built on to develop a second questionnaire to be administered to a second sample (citizen sample). More specifically, the open-ended questions used in the elite sample questionnaire were formulated into corresponding closed questions in the second questionnaire administered to the Citizen sample.

Obtaining the relevant data needed for this research project would have proved much more difficult were only one single type of questions to have been relied upon, especially because of the difficulty the researcher had in accessing informants from the GCC. Investigation of any aspect of the GCC can only be carried out after permission is granted. Furthermore, the sensitivity of political elite to some of the research questions proved a considerable obstacle that was only eventually overcome through reliance on personal contacts and the assistance of the Department of GCC affairs in the Qatari Foreign Ministry.

One of the problems of the open-ended questionnaire is that the coding of responses may be problematic. Nevertheless, this type of question was considered the best method for this research for two reasons. Firstly, open-ended questions offer respondents the opportunity to answer questions in more detail and to elaborate on and justify points of views, attitudes, and opinions. (Set against this is that this type of questions may result in difficulties of interpretation for the researcher, so that caution in this regard needs to be exercised.) Secondly, the open-ended type of questions allows the respondents to convey the subtleties of their attitudes instead of forcing them to choose answers that may or may not necessarily capture their viewpoints (Judd et. al., 1991).

### ***B. Interviews:***

The interview is a conversation initiated by the researcher with the intention of obtaining data relevant to his/her research, and directed by him/her towards specific issues and topics related to the aim of his study (Cohen and Manion, 1989). Thus, beside the questionnaire, the present study also employed semi-structured interviews.



The latter were conducted with some of the key actors at the GCC Secretariat General and the questions asked and issues raised during the interview were those dictated by the main objectives of this study.

The researcher prepared a list of questions to pose to the key (elite) figures who insisted, prior to the interview, on complete confidentiality. A small number of key actors refused to cooperate with the researcher and simply turned down the invitation for an interview. Ideally, more interviews should have been conducted: it was only through the help of personal contacts that it was possible to secure the agreement of four key officials. The interviewees were highly experienced administrators, some of them having held their position since the inception of the GCC. The interviews were carried out either at the GCC headquarters (during working hours) or elsewhere (outside working hours).

### *C. Nature and Type of the Political Elite Sample*

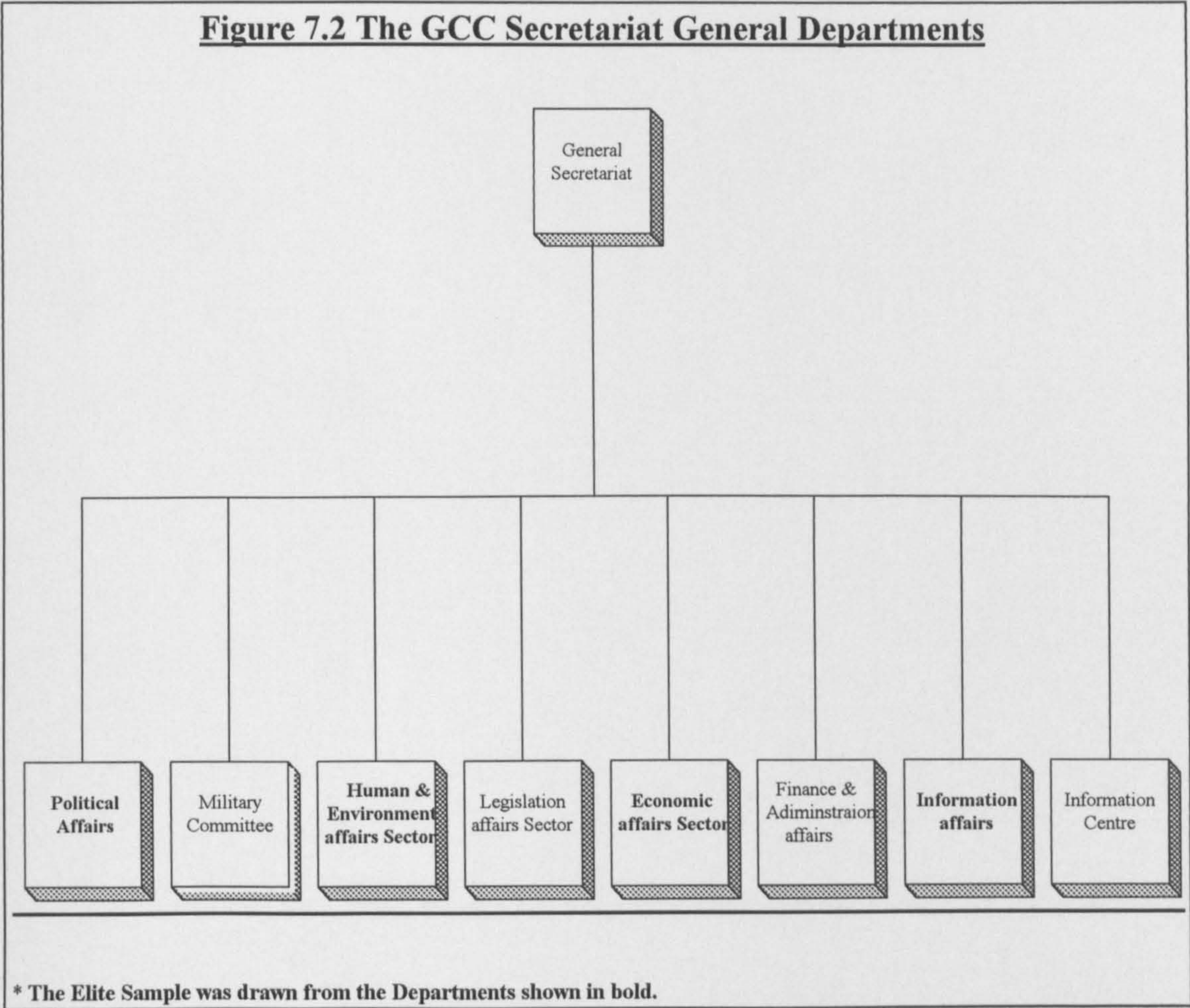
The fieldwork for this study was undertaken at the GCC Secretariat General in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Top-ranking officials at the GCC were targeted for two main reasons - by definition they are close to the actual policy-making process within the organisation, and, they originate from the various member states of the GCC. After discarding incompletely filled in questionnaires, a total of 39 policy-maker drawn from committees and sub-committees of the GCC Secretariat General were used for the purposes of analysis.

The role of the elite within the GCC is to lay the common ground necessary to achieve the coordination and/or harmonisation of policies between member states, and their implementation. The GCC elite is concerned with the study and evaluation of the policies submitted by members of the GCC Ministerial Council prior to the latter submitting them in turn to the Supreme Council for consideration.

The sample was drawn from the heads of the main committees and policy-makers. Since it was only possible to gain access to the committees covering political,



economic, social, and environmental affairs, the sample was composed of the policy-makers sitting on half of the GCC total number of committees. (Figure (7.2) shows the total set of committees making up the Secretariat General ). Each head of a committee that the researcher was allowed access to was given a questionnaire to distribute to the members of the committee or branch of committee he chairs. Relying on the help of heads of committees in the distribution and collection of questionnaires proved instrumental in two ways: not only was it more efficient, but it was also the best way to secure the cooperation of respondents guaranteeing a higher rate of return of the questionnaires than otherwise. In one case, the head committee for Economic affairs distributed the questionnaire together with an internal dictat requesting the members of his committee to fill in and return the questionnaires he distributed on behalf of the researcher.





### *D. Elite Sample's Characteristics:*

Sensing the sensitivity of many of the questions posed in the questionnaire, all the top-level GCC Secretariat General officials who volunteered to cooperate with the researcher chose to withhold information bearing on the nature of their position, the nature of departments they were associated with, and the duration of their service. Thus, nationality remained as the only variable by which the perceptions of the sample could be cross-tabulated. All the interviewees insisted prior to the start of each interview on not quoting their names and positions, justifying their request in terms of Article Sixteen of the GCC Charter whereby "[...] all the Secretariat General's staff [...] shall refrain from any action or behaviour that is incompatible with their duties and from divulging confidential matters relating to their appointments either during or after their tenure of office." (p.9).

### *Nationality*

One of the undertakings of the investigation of the GCC political elite's perceptions of this organisation is to explore how (and, indeed, whether) nationality is linked to (or possibly influences) attitudinal patterns. The nationalities of the elite sample embraced four of the six member states of the GCC owing to the following factors: the shortfall is explained by the fact that some of the officials were participating in study meetings in preparation for the annual GCC summit. Unavoidably, interviewing took place at a time that unfortunately coincided with preparations for the GCC summit.

**Table 7.1 GCC Secretariat General Civil Servants & Elites, by Nationality:**

Nationality	Employees	Policy- Making Elites	
	⊙ <i>Total</i>	⊕ <i>Total</i>	* <i>Sample Size</i>
Bahrainis	35	9	7
Omanis	19	5	3
Kuwaitis	5	2	0
Qataris	6	4	2
Saudis	263	35	27
Emiratis	3	2	0
<i>Total</i>	332	57	39

**Source:** ⊙ GCC Secretariat General

⊕ Estimated size of Elites by Nationality.

\* Author's data.



## **The Citizen Sample:**

### ***A. Nature and Type of Citizens' Sample***

As one of the main objectives of this study is to explore attitudes towards the GCC at various 'levels' within the organisation based on a study of citizen perceptions of the institution's policies, aims, problems and achievements. The investigation also sought to investigate, whether there is a political and a social basis for federalism, and if so, how extensive is that basis.

Attitudinal and perceptual positions can be explored in different ways. Such issues require the adoption of carefully constructed methods of investigation. One research strategy thought appropriate was the use in the questionnaire of both qualitative and quantitative questions, much as was the case with regard to the elite sample. A self-administered questionnaire was designed, partly in the light of findings gained from the political elite questionnaire (see above), and distributed among a sample of university students at the Universities of Kuwait and Qatar in, respectively, the States of Kuwait and Qatar. The sample was limited to Honours students in the two faculties of Social Sciences and Administration & Commerce in the universities.

The constrained nature of the sample reflects the difficulties of doing such research in the Gulf in particular of being able to questionnaire a sample of Gulf society at large. As noted earlier, investigating an issue of the kind addressed here requires research permission from the governments. What is more, permission to carry out the required fieldwork is not always forthcoming, especially when the study is concerned with political issues. One other factor militating against opting for a sample of 'ordinary' citizens is the fact that interviewing females particularly, in, say, the street, is not a socially sanctioned practice within the ultra-conservative societies of the Arabian Gulf.



Time, effort and, most importantly, the sensitivity of politics in the region ruled out the option of a more broadly based sample survey. Given the very sensitive nature of politics in the Arab countries, and the consequent tendency of the populace to avoid debating political issues in public, obtaining credible and unbiased data (i.e., views, opinions, attitudes, etc.) would necessitate gaining the trust of interviewees, a process that is, at best, time and effort-consuming, if plausible. Wuelker (1993; p. 165) points out in this regard, in the context of his discussion of questionnaires as a research method in an Asian environment, that "[...] it has been found that in many of those [Asian] countries human relationships have remained more 'natural' and 'unspoilt' than in the west. Mutual trust still plays a bigger part than is the [...] [case] of the industrialised countries. [...] Furthermore, the clear cut social structure and the infrequency of intermingling of the different classes make it possible to achieve the desired purpose with smaller samples than in the west." [emphasis added].

In Qatar, the sampling design comprised several stages. Opting for Honours students in the departments of Geography, Economics, and Administration, the researcher requested and obtained their timetables so as to be able to make contact. Qatar University has yet to set up an independent Department of Politics, though, politics and politics-related subjects are taught in both the Departments of Economics and of Administration.

In selecting the sample at Kuwait University, and again within the objective of meeting time constraints, attention was restricted to Honours students in the two departments of Geography and Politics. Honours students in the department of Geography at both Kuwait and Qatar Universities would have studied, over the four-year period of study, three or more subjects bearing on the GCC. Thus, by the final Honours year, students are expected to be quite knowledgeable about the GCC. Beyond the various subjects studied within academe, information about the GCC could be acquired from a wide variety of other sources. Faculty and departmental seminars play an active role in informing students about the organisation, as does the Gulf mass media, which is predominantly subject to state control and censorship, though news relating to the GCC is frequently reported. Further sources of knowledge



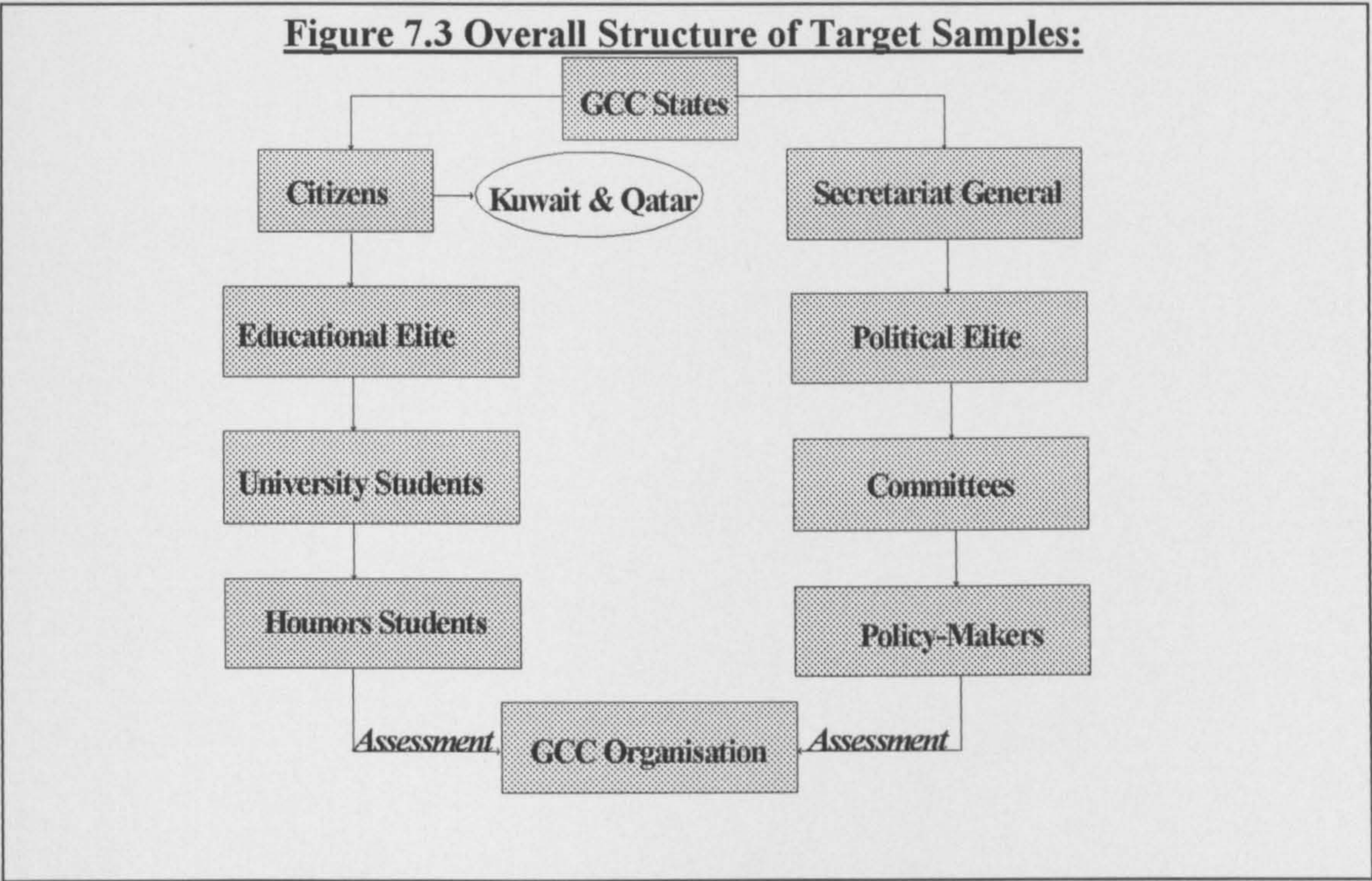
about the GCC include places of social interaction and information exchange as the *majlis* (pl. *majaalis*) (a male gathering place) and educational panels (public seminars and conferences (organised by Universities and other educational institutions)).

The design of the self-completed questionnaire distributed among students went through a number of stages. The questionnaires piloted using (Arab) university students both at Qatar University as well as the University of Glasgow. A second and final version of the questionnaire was then designed incorporating the insights and comments obtained from the pilot survey. The final version of the questionnaire falls into seven related parts. With the exception of those parts which were concerned with information on the background of informants (e.g. gender), all the other remaining (six) parts consisted of questions specifically formulated to either determine the respondent's knowledge of the GCC or their perceptions and attitudes on some aspect or other of the GCC. Specifically, part one explore the respondents' knowledge of the GCC; part two pursues their perceptions of the underlying reasons for the establishment of the GCC as well as of its functions; part three gauges their social ties and part four examines the question of identity within the GCC through an exploration of their loyalties. Part five explored attitudes towards the politics of GCC before and after 1990; and part six is concerned with the sample's perceptions of the status and future developments of the GCC. A final question invited the sample to express its views on forms of cooperation among the GCC member states.

Concern among students with the GCC, and of developments within it, often translates into the organisation of a series of conferences and seminars debating political cooperation in the Gulf region. The Kuwaiti Students Union, for instance, held a series of debates during April 1981, November 1984 and 1985 focusing on the achievements of the GCC and the various impediments that continue to stall its economic, social and political objectives. The occasional interviews with students published by the Gulf press also bespeak a high level of awareness of the GCC and an appreciation of the reality and challenges of political cooperation among the member states of this council (see, e.g., the Kuwaiti dailies *al-Watan* [April 3rd, 1981], *al-Siyasah* [November 28th, 1984], and *al-Qabass* [November 4th, 1985]). It follows



then that many university students are reasonably familiar with the history, problems, and prospects of the GCC. In fact the educational elite is not the only category of Gulf society which is commonly interviewed about GCC issues on the pages of the region's newspapers and magazines; the press also regularly carries interviews with both the political elite as well as citizens (see, for instance, *al-Riyah* in December 19th, 1993 issue). Figure (7.3) schematises the sample structure.



**B. Fieldwork & Sampling Process**

The gathering of sufficient (and relevant) data for this research project required lengthy field visits. Close supervision of the research process was necessary because of difficulties with the sampling frame, and to ensure an adequate return of questionnaires. There were no readily available reliable lists of the student population; owing to the fact that the fieldwork for this project coincided with the start of the second term of the academic year in Gulf universities, it was necessary to rely on incomplete lists. Secondly, lest some of the sampled respondents might prove unenthusiastic about the questionnaires and fail to cooperate, official authorisation was obtained to attend the designated Honours students classes half an hour before they



were due to end in order to explain and distribute the questionnaire (together with the help of teaching staff).

A set of important procedures had to be undertaken prior to the distribution of the questionnaire. First, prior to approaching respondents at Qatar University, it was necessary to gain permission from the Vice-Chancellor. Permission to have access to students in the Faculty of Arts at Kuwait University was secured from the Dean of Faculty of Humanities at Qatar University. This intervention was equally instrumental in securing such facilities as accommodation, a study office, and the cooperation of staff. To sample students in the faculty of Commerce and Economics (in Qatar), it was necessary to gain permission from the head of the Department of Politics. Prior to distribution of the designed questionnaire, the researcher, once he was introduced to the students by a member of faculty staff, would usually start by reassuring the sample that all information provided would be treated in strict confidentiality, and would then proceed to explain the aims of the study and illustrate how to fill in the questionnaire.

#### *D. Characteristics of the Citizen Sample*

The citizen sample embodied a varied mix of social characteristics. In term of their social characteristics, the student sample represents individuals of varying social backgrounds representing the different social classes of the Gulf society. Such a diversity should benefit a study probing attitudinal and perception patterns in as it is likely to be more representative of Gulf society at large. Furthermore, the student sample is important in its own right, since they constitute the basic pool out of which future policy-makers and key figures in government are likely to be drawn. The choice to draw the study sample exclusively from Honours students was grounded in the assumption that such students would be more knowledgeable about the organisation than students in, say, their first years of university.

Student attitudes about political issues in the Arab world have received much attention in the literature, and most notably in, among others, Farah (1977), Ebraheem



(1981), and Salame' (1988). In a study of the young and of their perceptions of politics and democracy in the Arab World, based on a sample of UAE university students, al-Suwaidi (1995) concluded that the "young and better educated generation [of Arabs] ... are more aware of the challenges" (p. 91) confronting their society as well as the opportunities available to them within this society. Being the 'young and better educated generation' of Arabs and showing a greater level of awareness, students are arguably the more likely within the society to express their views more freely, voice its concerns more articulately and appreciate more fully the complexities of politics.

The number of students surveyed for the purposes of this study totalled 700 respondents. As Table 7.2 illustrates, out of the 700 administered questionnaires, more than 590 (a response rate of 84.3%) were retained as valid. Some 15.7% of the total number of returned questionnaires had to be discarded on account of their incompleteness. This high rate of return was due to the care given to the distribution and collection of questionnaires, the cooperation of faculty staff, and perhaps the fact that the students saw the experience as an opportunity to express their attitudes freely and in total confidentiality. The sampling design needed to incorporate questions seeking profile information about the respondents and identifying variability in attitudinal patterns were cross-tabulated against nationality. In terms of their demographic features, although the respondents were sampled in two locales, viz. University of Kuwait and the university of Qatar, the sample was in fact drawn from several GCC member states. Besides the Qatari and Kuwaiti students, the sample comprised also Bahraini, Emirati, Omani and Saudi students studying at these universities.

Table 7.2 Distribution of the Citizens Sample by Nationality:

Nationality	Sample by:	
	Frq	%
Kuwaiti	270	45.8
Qatari	274	46.4
Other GCC	46	6.8
Total	590	100

Ⓢ Total number of students in: Qatar University 6943 (1995/96)  
Kuwait University 11017 (1992/91).

Source: Survey



## Nationality

As regards nationality, the sample falls into three categories. Besides the Qatari and Kuwaiti respondents, the sample also included a small contingent of students from other GCC member states. The universities of Qatar and Kuwait were chosen as a locale for conducting for both general and specific reasons. First, the nature of the questions explored in the study could have proved too sensitive to examine in the rest of the Gulf states. In his discussion of the difficulties inherent in mapping public opinion in the Arab world, Salame' (1988) argues that "Polls are not something much cherished by authoritarian regimes and the few we have are restricted to a very limited group of Arab countries and on a very limited number of topics. Hence, to speak of Arab public opinion is a very risky exercise, where the illustration you use is easily refuted as unrepresentative" (p. 235). Second, to the extent that the researcher is of Qatari nationality and a former graduate of a Kuwaiti university, Qatar and Kuwait were the only two GCC countries where he could rely on personal contacts to secure permissions and facilities instrumental to the undertaking of his fieldwork. Third, the choice of Kuwait as a focal point of sampling offers an interesting and extra line of inquiry relating to whether there has been an identifiable shift in attitudinal patterns among the Kuwaiti citizens as a result of the Iraqi invasion of 1990.

## Gender

It is widely accepted within research in the social sciences that gender and gender factors account for different behavioural patterns. Judd et. al., (1991) emphasised the importance of gender considerations in social studies, affirming that explicit information should be provided about the gender of the informants participating in an experiment or survey bearing on such social phenomena as attitudes and perceptions.

Arab societies are generally perceived as heavily male-dominated and patriarchal. Though women have for long been relegated to a secondary and



subservient role within Arab society, this state of affairs has been gradually changing in more recent times as women have been playing an increasingly more active role in society. An exploration of attitudinal patterns within the Gulf society could therefore be expected to reflect the changing status and position of women within this largely conservative society.

To establish whether there are any significant differences between male and female students' attitudinal patterns, that is, whether gender accounts for attitudinal differences among students, required a sample drawn from both sexes.

As Table 7.3 indicates, male respondents are outnumbered by females in the survey. While male students account for 40.1% of the total sample (236 out of a total of 590 students), females represent 59.9% (352 out of a total of 590 students). The overrepresentation of females in the survey reflects the dominant ratio of females to males at both Qatari and Kuwaiti universities (see footnote appended to Table 7.3). The larger number of females vis-à-vis males in higher education can itself be taken as an indicator of the considerable progress that women have made in contemporary Gulf society.

This imbalance is true for all the national sub-sample, the differences being most extreme amongst Kuwaitis (34.4% males and 65.6% female).

Table 7.3 Distribution of Citizens Sample by Nationality and Gender.

Age	Nationality			Total
	Kuwaiti	Qatari	*Other GCC	
Male	93	123	20	236
%	34.4	45.2	43.5	40.1
Female	177	149	26	352
%	65.6	54.8	56.5	59.9
Total	270	272	46	590
%	45.9	46.3	7.8	100

⊕ Total number of students in: Qatar University (Male: 1875; Female: 5068 - Figures from 1995/96); Kuwait University (Male: 3502; Female: 7515 - Figures from 1991/92).  
Source: 1. Kuwait: Annual Statistical Abstract 1994, p. 367. Qatar: p. 150



**Age:**

Age is one of the social categories also assumed to play a significant role in influencing differences and changes in such behavioural phenomena as social perceptions and attitudes. Besides influencing perceptions and attitudes, age could also provide a clear referential index as to the nature of the dominant age group within a particular society.

While, not unexpectedly, the majority of the sample, totalling 85.1% of the overall sample, fall into the 'under-25 years of age' category, the 25 to 35 age category, the only other group constituting the sample, accounts for 14.9% of the total sample. Table (7.4) illustrates the distribution of the sample by age. The relatively young nature of the informants is on account of the fact that the investigated sample is drawn in its entirety from university students, a societal group customarily made up of the younger generation within society.

The results in relation to the two variable of age and gender were found to be insignificant and were therefore discarded from consideration.

**Table 7.4 Distribution of the Citizens Sample by Age:**

Age	<i>Nationality</i>			Total
	Kuwaiti	Qatari	⊗ Other GCC	
Under 25	238	219	45	502
%	88.1	79.9	97.8	85.1
25-35	32	55	1	88
%	11.9	20.1	2.2	14.9
Over 35	0	0	0	0
%	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	270	274	46	590
<b>%</b>	45.8	46.4	7.8	100

⊗: Consisted students from: Bahrain, Oman, UAE, Saudi Arabia.

**Type of Students:**

Gulf states have similar educational systems, especially in terms of the duration of schooling given in the various stages of education. The school entry age throughout the GCC is six years and university entry in all GCC member states requires



completion of 12 years of combined elementary and secondary schooling. Entry to university in all GCC states is dependant on satisfaction of a number of requirements, namely, passing the national secondary school certificate examination as well as achieving a set mark in this examination. Building on the similarity of the educational systems, the GCC has set up a sub-committee specifically concerned with the harmonisation of curricula at all levels of schooling and education.

In Qatar, the Civil Service Council is the main government department that oversees the allocation of jobs to graduates in accordance with their qualifications. Jobs in governmental sectors are widely preferred by new and future graduates, on account of the greater security they offer, particularly in comparison to the private sector. Al-Kuwari (1996) criticised the Qatari government policy towards the education sector, asserting that a failure to recruit new graduates into the government and its reliance on foreign expertise, caused a major financial problem for the state. There has been, however, an increasing tendency on the part of GCC governments to recruit nationals into key positions previously occupied by foreign expatriates, as part of a resolute process of replacement of foreign cadres with newly graduate nationals.

This sample was undertaken with the express aim of investigating attitudes towards the GCC. A random sample drawn from university students, and, in particular, from the fourth year (Honours) students, was deemed most suitable in this regard (see above on the nature of departments the students sample is affiliated with). The decision to sample specifically Honours students was motivated by the assumption that this category of students would be more informed about the GCC and therefore more capable of providing considered responses to the set of questions included in the study questionnaires.

At both Qatar and Kuwait Universities, students in the Departments of Geography study such subjects as the industrial, population, human and urban geography of Kuwait, Qatar, or/and other Gulf states. For instance, a fourth year module is entitled 'Qatar or Kuwait and the Arabian Peninsula' and is mainly concerned with the study of the history as well as other issues bearing on both the



Gulf and the GCC. Other modules, such as political geography address issues and questions bearing on the GCC. Similarly, Departments of Politics in Kuwait and Departments of Economics and Administration in both Kuwait and Qatar offer modules focusing on the GCC and matters related to this organisation.

### 7.3. Secondary Sources:

Secondary data bearing on the issues raised in this study were collected from a number of sources including Qatar University Library, Kuwait University Library, the Kuwait Information Centre, and the Information Centre of the GCC General Secretariat in Riyadh. The secondary data collected and referred to consisted of official GCC documents, proceedings of seminars on GCC affairs, radio and television programmes and debates addressing issues connected with the GCC, and books, articles, newspapers, and other literature tackling various aspects of the GCC.

The secondary data were selected with a view to contextualising the arguments of the study, broadening the scope of discussion and illuminating the findings of the empirical study of the two samples. Some of the secondary sources of data were also collected at the University of Glasgow as well as the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Most of the secondary data, however, were collected during the researcher's first visit to the GCC Secretariat General in Riyadh and especially during his second visit to Qatar and Kuwait. One of the secondary sources of data which proved most valuable to the present study were the proceedings of the seminar dealing with GCC issues and organised by the Faculties of Social Science of the various GCC universities. A second important source was Gulf newspapers which in some cases conduct annual investigations of the GCC including critical articles and editorials, and interviews with both citizens and the elite classes. These investigations are usually carried out by the press just before the Supreme Council's annual summit held in one of the GCC member states.

Though the secondary Arabic data addressing the various facets of the GCC (al- 'Esa & al-Manofi (1985), Nakhlah (1986), Otaiby (1990) and Obied (1996)) are



extensive, they remain highly selective and tentative. The governments' sensitivity to any critique challenging or undermining their objectives, on the one hand, and the general conservatism of political analysts, on the other is largely responsible for this particular feature of GCC literature.

#### **7.4. Data and Sample Survey Problems:**

Zarkovich (1993) examined some of the problems of sampling work in developing nations, arguing that it is often the case "that in underdeveloped countries the possibilities for choice are seriously limited in almost any respect." (p.102). Some of the drawbacks of the research data and sample central to this study concern the nature of the data as well as the sample coverage.

One problem with the questionnaire and interview data obtained from the political elite is the fact that the information was restricted to nominal-scales, limiting thereby the possibility of implementing advanced statistical tests. However, this problem does not affect the validity of the data, nor the conclusions reached.

Difficulties were also experienced in the coding of the answers, particularly for the open-ended questions. As the data was loaded onto the computer, it soon became obvious that the only software that could manipulate the data was SPSSX. The problem was, however, solved by converting the responses obtained for each open-ended question into an ordered hierarchy of categories. In particular, responses to the question bearing on, for instance, perceptions of the GCC's aims, were converted into the variable categories 'very important', 'important', 'less important', and 'not important'.

Though all six nationalities corresponding to the six member states making up the GCC were represented in our elite sample, not all of these nationalities were equally represented. While some were over-represented, others were considerably under-represented in the sample. As is indicated by Table (7.1), the over-



representation of certain nationalities arose from the unequal representation of the various nationalities amongst the GCC Secretariat General civil servants. The representation of the various nationalities within the sample matches the overall breakdown of the political elite by nationality within the GCC Secretariat General. Thus, whereas Saudi civil servants account for almost 80% of the total number of the organisation's employees, nearly 70% comprised Saudi officials, in the elite sample mirroring their over-representation within the GCC. In part this over-representation of Saudi officials reflects the overall demographic dominance of Saudi Arabia, though it may also be due to the location of the GCC headquarters in Riyadh. Some of the under-representation of the other nationalities of Kuwaiti and Emirati Secretariat General policy-makers, was due to chance- either/being on holiday and/or declining to respond to the questionnaire or agree to an interview, for example. The under-representation of the Qatari nationality within our elite sample --only 2 out of the 4 Qatari Secretariat General officials were available to fill in the questionnaire-- was due to the political commitments of these officials at the time the fieldwork was undertaken.

Access to the student population presented numerous difficulties. First, since Qatar University adopts a policy of segregation between male and female students, the researcher had to rely on the cooperation of faculty staff in the distribution and collection of questionnaires intended for female students. Second, not all lecturers were willing to grant the researcher a chance to distribute the study questionnaire amongst their students. Third, as noted earlier in this chapter, undertaking a survey in any Gulf university requires permission from the authorities, approval for which customarily takes a considerable time to secure.

### **7.5. Overview:**

This chapter has aimed to meet two main goals: (i) to introduce the general framework and methodology adopted in this study; and (ii) to furnish a detailed account of the two types of sample investigated. With regard to the first concern, the



chapter has outlined the nature of strategy and methods followed in gathering data bearing on attitudinal patterns towards the GCC, (b) discussed the various problems encountered during the fieldwork in connection with both the gathering of the relevant data (e.g., problems emanating from reliance on questionnaires and interviews as methods of eliciting data in the context of this work), and the sampling process (e.g., difficulties in accessing respondents), and (c), justified the choice of the two types of sample examined in this research project. Of the second aim, the chapter discussed the chosen samples in terms of their major characteristics (i.e., nationality of respondents, their gender, age, etc.).

In gathering data for this study, numerous obstacles were encountered, especially with respect to sampling and access to respondents. Such obstacles and difficulties were discussed earlier in this chapter but some of these obstacles are worth emphasising again.

First, approaching females (even for the purposes of a survey) is not a socially sanctioned practice within the ultra-conservative Arabian Gulf societies. Since Qatar University enforces a policy of segregation between male and female students, the researcher had to rely on the cooperation of faculty staff in the distribution of questionnaires among female students and the collection of these questionnaires. Second, carrying out a survey in any Gulf institution, be it political or educational, necessarily requires permission from the relevant authorities. What is more, permission to carry out the required fieldwork either customarily takes a considerable time to secure or is not always forthcoming, especially when the fieldwork bears on a political institution. Third, politics remains largely a 'sensitive' topic in the region, with Gulf citizens and political elites generally preferring to eschew political issues in public, making, thereby, the obtention of (credible and unbiased) data bearing on attitudes and opinions towards political institutions considerably difficult. Numerous GCC officials refused to cooperate with the researcher and simply turned down the invitation for an interview, and, as a consequence, the sample had to be scaled down and limited to the heads of only certain policy committees.



The political elite's sensitivity to some of the research questions proved a major obstacle and it was only through reliance on personal contacts and assistance of the Department of GCC Affairs in the Qatari Foreign Ministry that the agreement of a number of GCC officials to participate in the survey was eventually secured. Similarly, it was only owing to the intervention of key university figures such as the Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Qatar University that it was possible to secure access to students and the cooperation of faculty staff.



## **GCC Cooperation: Elite Perceptions**

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### **8.1 Introduction:**

Chapter Eight is devoted to an analysis of the perceptions of a sample drawn from the political elite working at the GCC Secretariat General. In the first part of the chapter focus is placed on elite perceptions of the factors underlying the establishment of the GCC. The sample under study is comprised of policy makers and heads of policy committees. The sample's perceptions will be evaluated regarding, first, the role and importance of regional reasons - i.e., those specific to the Gulf and Middle East regions - and, second, the role of extra-regional factors, events and developments underpinning the emergence of the GCC as a regional alliance. The second part will examine their perceptions, and evaluation, of what the GCC has achieved. Specifically, the main aims of the GCC, its problems are assessed; together with attempts at cooperation between the states acting through the GCC.

### **8.2. Reasons for Establishment of the GCC: Elite's Perceptions :**

#### **Regional Factors:**

Nakhlah (1986), Obeid (1996) and Ramazani (1988), are among those who have addressed the issue of what factors underlay the rise of the GCC as a regional alliance. They contend that of all the factors, directly or indirectly, involved in the emergence of the GCC, regional factors - that is, factors specific to the Gulf and the Middle Eastern area, - were the most important. These 'internal' reasons can be classified into two broad categories: 'push' factors originating from within the GCC



states themselves and 'push' factors originating from within the Gulf generally and the Middle-East.

### *A. Internal Motivations:*

According to much of the research on the circumstances surrounding the rise of the GCC as a regional alliance (see, for instance, Ommer (1993), Qassim (1993) and Obeid (1996)), GCC-internal factors have played a much less important role in the emergence of the GCC than have external regional factors such as the Iranian and Iraqi threats to the sovereignty of the member states, and the Iran/Iraq war. Though the reported factors internal to the GCC which created the demand for its establishment are various, this study will focus only on what the literature has argued as being the most important. Thus, the survey questionnaire listed four such reasons frequently described in the literature, namely (i) 'the political lead given by GCC rulers' or sheikhs' (to create a platform for cooperation among the member states), (ii) the 'desire of the citizens' for closer political cooperation between neighbouring friendly states, (iii) the 'historical ties and affinities' of the member states, and (iv) the 'common political, economic and social characteristics' uniting the member states and which distinguish them as a group within the region.

Nearly half of the sample perceived the 'rulers' desire' as the 'most important' internal factor in the creation of the GCC. The second most 'important' internal factor, to be cited was 'historical relations'; 46.2% of the sample were of the view that 'historical relations and bonds' were an important factor in the materialisation of the GCC. Both findings are hardly surprising in view of two considerations: the elite's strong loyalty to their governments and a widespread awareness among the GCC citizens of the strong cultural, linguistic, political and social affinities that cut across the societies and peoples of the various member states. Table (8.1) shows the results obtained in regard to the sample's perceptions of the importance of 'the rulers' desire' and 'the historical relations and affinities' factors in the rise of the GCC. The least important reason was given as the 'desire of the citizens'; 35.9% of the sample perceived this factor as 'least important' in the creation of the GCC. One reason for



this was explained by a top senior official at the GCC Secretariat General thus: “[...] the most important internal factor is the desire of Sheikhs; however, the Gulf peoples' aspiration for unification is a common reason [among the GCC members] but not a very effective one.” (Gulf Elite.1).

**Table 8.1 Elite Perception of Key Factors influencing the Creation of the GCC %**

GCC Reason for Establishment	Level of Importance			
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Least Important
Desire of Rulers	48.7	23.1	7.7	15.4
Desire of Citizens	7.7	17.9	28.2	35.9
Historical Relation	5.1	46.2	25.6	17.9
☆Common Political & Social Characteristics	41	17.9	20.5	12.8

☆ 8% of the total answers are missing value

A more detailed statement of Table 8.1 in Appendix B shows the breakdown of officials' perceptions by nationality. The majority of Bahraini, Omani and Saudi officials ranked the 'desire of rulers (Sheikhs)' as the 'most important' factor, while the Qataris saw the 'desire of sheikhs' as the second most important. Since the sample was made up entirely of GCC officials, these findings could hardly be unexpected and could be viewed as confirming the general tendency among Gulf civil servants - and political elite in general- to show total loyalty and allegiance to the political systems and heads of their states.

## **B. External Motivations:**

Turning to the regional factors considered important to the emergence of the GCC, Qassim (1993), among others, cited several factors. Chief among these were the security threats posed by the Iranian revolution, Iraqi ambitions for territorial expansion, the Iran/Iraq war, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the USSR's manoeuvres for political influence in the region.

From the elite survey, the most crucial external reason for the creation of the GCC was the 'Iran/Iraq war'; 69.2% of the sample thought this critical. It is not difficult to understand why the 1979 Iran/Iraq war was perceived by many in the Arabian Gulf states to have played such a significant role in the decision to create the GCC.



The outbreak of the Iran/Iraq war and the protracted nature of the conflict led to a genuine fear amongst the Arabian Gulf states that it might spill over and envelop the whole region. The Iran/Iraq war brought home to the political regimes of the GCC countries the dangerously volatile nature of the region's politics and the potential and real dangers that small and vulnerable states were facing as a consequence of the political instability in the region. In the words of one GCC official from Kuwait (Gulf Elite.1): "Fear of the threat of the Iran/Iraq war spread out within the GCC governments., and I think that it was one of the main reasons why the GCC came about."

The second most important factor in the establishment of the GCC, from the point of view of the GCC officials surveyed in this study, was the 'Iranian threat'. Shuriedeh (1995) argued that the outbreak of the Iranian revolution made the issue of security a top priority for all of the Arabian Gulf states and that the GCC as a regional alliance was born out of a genuine concern of the member states for their security and political stability. Fear of the Iranian revolution spilling over to the littoral Gulf states was not unfounded: Iranian leaders made no secret of their ambitions to export their revolution to neighbouring countries, and others beyond. The revolution was also feared on account of the sectarian divisions it was perceived to foster in the midst of the Muslim '*ummah*'. Ramadan (1993) argued that since it began, the February 1979 Khomainsi revolution was looked upon by the political systems of the Gulf states as a threat far exceeding those from Iran spelling during the Shah's regime. The Iranian revolution inflamed the Shi'ite ideology, threatening thereby not only the political regimes and stability of the Gulf states but much of the Arab world. (Tables (8.2) presents the political elite's perceptions of the role of external factors in the creation of the GCC.)



**Table 8.2 The Policy-Makers Perceptions of the Iran/ Iraq War, the USSR Threat and other factors in the GCC Establishment (Percentage)**

GCC Reasons for Establishment	Level of Importance			
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Least Important
Iranian Threat	51.3	5.1	0	5.2
Iran/Iraq War	69.2	7.7	5.2	5.2
Iraqi Threat	30.8	41	2.1	2.6
Israeli Threat	5.1	41	17.9	5.1
USSR Threat	10.3	28.2	33.3	10.2
Arab Support	7.7	2.6	38.6	20.6
Western Support	10.3	25.7	35.9	20.6
Others	5.2	0	0	25.6

All of the GCC officials, regardless of nationality, viewed the 'Iranian threat' as the most important factor in the establishment of the GCC. The Qatari officials were the only sub-sample who put the 'Iraqi threat' as second.

Elite perceptions of what accounts for the most important regional factor in the emergence of the GCC confirms the largely acknowledged fact that the GCC was created as a first step towards counterbalancing regional threats and addressing the security concerns of the member states. Writing in the Gulf daily *al-Qabas*, al-'Esa (1985) asserted that "security (concerns) justifiably emerged as a result of the situation in the (Gulf) area ... political and military developments ... the US intervention and its manoeuvres to protect American interests, ... the presence of the oil (and) the outbreak of the Iranian revolution (are) all reasons that made concern for security justifiable."

### C. Other Motivating Factors in the Creation of the GCC:

Several other factor are significant in explaining the creation of the GCC, notably 'regional disputes' including not only the Iran/Iraq war, but also the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Israeli invasion of south Lebanon. Halliday (1980) argued that the potential spread of the Iranian revolution, coupled with overt expansionist policies of the Iranian fundamentalist regime and a determination on the part of such a regime to subvert Shi'ite minorities in the area, presented the Gulf states with major security concerns and palpable dangers. Fear of the Iran/Iraq war

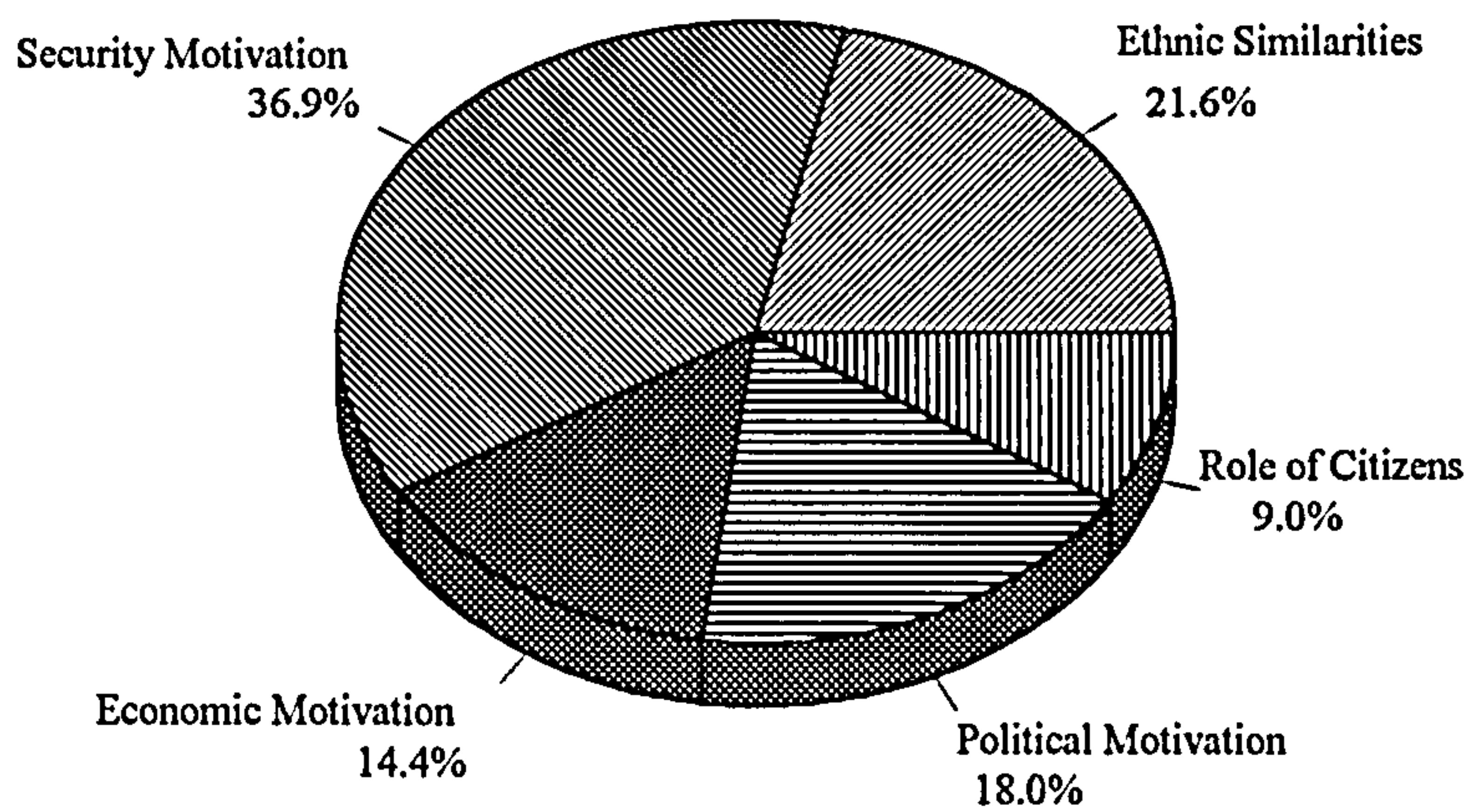


spreading to other states in the Gulf, a fear that was made even more immediate owing to the geographical proximity of the Arabian Gulf states to both parties to the conflict, was found to be perceived by most of the sample to constitute the most important regional conflict contributing to the emergence of the GCC.

Four 'push factors' were identifiable from the survey:

- (1) Citizen demand: Responses subsumed under this category made reference to such factors as the cultural and societal affinities among the GCC countries as well as the intimate and long-standing historical relations between the Arabian Gulf citizens.
- (2) Economic Similarities - the fact that all GCC countries are oil producing countries, have similar economies totally dependent on oil, are all members of OPEC and AOPC - is the second category of regional factors pointed out in the responses of the sample.
- (3) Common Ethnicity & Cultural affinities: Responses specifying common ethnicity and cultural affinities as an important factor in the establishment of the GCC emphasised the role of a common religion, race, language, common culture in facilitating and prompting the creation of the GCC.
- (4) Political affinities: subsuming references to the geographic and demographic size of the Gulf states, similarities in political regimes, desire of ruling sheikhs, and the strong historical relations between the Arabian Gulf monarchies.
- (5) Common Security Concerns: in reference to security concerns deriving from such regional disputes as Iran/Iraq war and such regional threats as the Iranian revolution and the need for the GCC member states to collectively strengthen the internal front through military cooperation and enhancement of military capabilities, was a fifth category of factors specified in the responses of the sample. Security and security concerns: was perceived by the sample to have been the most important regional reason for the creation of the GCC; as many as 36.9% of the total responses saw security as the most important factor in the creation of the GCC. Figure (8.1) tabulates the results.



**Figure 8.1 Regional Reasons for the Creation of the GCC and their Importance**

Clearly 'security' was regarded by the majority of the elite GCC officials as the most important regional factor in the emergence of the GCC (Figure 8.1). This is not difficult to comprehend in view of the strained relations between the various countries of the region and the hostility that has long characterised the region; Iran's persistent claims to Bahraini territory, the assassination attempt on the Amir of Kuwait in the early 1980s by a Lebanese pro-Iranian militant, the Iranian revolution together with the Iran/Iraq war have all contributed to insecurity, in the region. The important role of 'security' and security-related issues in the establishment of the GCC was discussed by a great many scholars. Al-Hawari (1993) argued that Iran, under revolutionary leadership, continues to represent a permanent threat to the security of the Gulf states and that Israel, equipped with a superior military arsenal and unmatched nuclear capabilities, constituted a real threat to the Gulf state and to the countries of the whole region.

A second 'push' factor is represented by common ethnicity and identity affinities; 21.6% of the sample noted the common ethnic origins of the peoples of the Arabian Gulf states as being an important factor in the creation of the GCC alliance. Some differences were apparent by nationality.

In an interview for the newspaper *al-Siyyasah* (24/11/1993) Bishara, the GCC Ex-Secretary General, asserted that the Arabian Gulf states came under increasing



threats from neighbouring regional powers during the 1980s and that the GCC was created with two main purposes in mind, namely, (i) to maintain the status quo in the Gulf area and counteract the Iranian revolution and thwart its leaders' attempts to export it to neighbouring countries, and (ii) to strengthen the ability of the GCC member states to counter any regional threats.

The ex-Secretary-General's assertion confirms the claim that regional factors were critical in the establishment of the GCC. He noted, as an example of the threats that the GCC countries faced from external powers, the immense pressures exerted by Iraq during and subsequent to the 1978 Baghdad Summit on the Arabian Gulf countries to sever diplomatic relations with Egypt. Braun (1988) pointed out that the GCC states' weakness and vulnerability in the face of other regional powers derives from their much limited military means and capabilities.

### **International Factors and the Emergence of the GCC**

There is considerable agreement in the literature on the fact that international (i.e. extra- regional) factors have played a much less important role than regional factors in the creation of the GCC. International factors connected, in one way or another, to the emergence of the GCC have been classified into the two broad categories 'international support' (i.e. backing and encouragement from the major members of the international community) and 'international threats'.

#### **A. International Support**

The role of international support in the emergence of the regional alliance have been discussed by many scholars (see, for instance, Ommer (1993) and Qassim (1993)). According to much of this literature, the struggle between the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR, in their manoeuvres for supremacy in the Gulf region ultimately speeded up the GCC-formation process. Discussing the situation of the GCC states in an increasingly unstable world, al-Alkim (1994:125) wrote that "In



the past, the GCC states pursued the GCC's policy of non-alignment. However, their fear of the USSR and of the radical governments in the region led them to pursue a more conciliatory policy toward the USA" and that "The GCC are totally dependent on the West, especially the USA, for their security. This dependence is increased by the fact that Western nations supply most of the GCC states' arms.." (P: 74)

The GCC officials expressed somewhat different opinions as to the factors which assisted the establishment of GCC. As Table 8.3, Appendix B indicates, some 33.3% and 25.6% of the GCC officials cited the emergence of 'regional blocs' like EEC and NATO and the 'manoeuvres of the superpowers (USA and USSR) and their struggle to consolidate their political influence in the Gulf area respectively as a 'very important' factor in the creation of the GCC. For some 18%, the geo-political importance of the Gulf region was the second most important factor in the creation of the GCC, while, 5.1% of the sample saw the American and Soviet struggle to control oil resources as an important international factor in the arise of the GCC. Qassim (1993) argued that because of the pro-west nature of the GCC governments and the conspicuous American support for this alliance the USSR dismissed the GCC as a pro- western organisation. Wenner (1988) affirmed that the Soviet Union's intervention in the 1986 South Yemen events was undertaken with the aim of making its existence felt in the region. With the exception of Kuwait, most of the Gulf states were opposed at the time to the establishment of any diplomatic relations with the USSR because of its invasion of Afghanistan. In the meantime, they pursued close political relations with USA and the Western bloc (Qassim 1993). Kuwait's decision to break with the other Arabian Gulf states and entertain diplomatic relations with USSR was a reaction to the USA's alignment with Israel in its conflict with the Arabs.

In their responses to the question bearing on the nature and importance of external factors in the emergence of the GCC, the officials considered Arab support as of less importance than other external factors in the establishment of the GCC (see Table 8.4, Appendix B). Several factors help explain the trend, most notably the failure of the Arab states to prevent, or react firmly, to the escalation of the Iranian threat to the Gulf states, and the ineffectiveness of the Arab League in resolving long-



standing disputes between a number of Arab states. Having said that, it should be noted that notwithstanding the political conflict between the states of the GCC and some Arab radical regimes, most Arab countries have always supported the Gulf states and their efforts to forge an alliance in the face of external threats to their security.

Overall, the elite sample considered the role of external factors as being more important than other internal factors to the materialisation of the GCC. Qassim (1993) and al-Alkim 1994, as others, explained how the Arabian Gulf states sought the support of the Western bloc, led by the USA, in their efforts to form the GCC. Predictably, the United States' reaction to the establishment of the GCC was positive. To protect and ensure non-interrupted oil shipment during the Iran/Iraq war, the United States' deployed warships in the Gulf sea. The establishment of the GCC was also supported by the British, French and other Western governments. The Gulf states' moves towards a self-dependent defence policy was both welcomed and supported by the USA and the Western bloc which saw in these moves the reduction of their own role in protecting impotent Arab oil-producing countries. Rajab (1989) asserted that it was only through coordination between the US government and the GCC member states was the Iranian threat to these Gulf countries was thwarted.

#### **B. Other International factors:**

The threats inherent in the communist ideology, on the one hand, and Israel's perceived expansionist policies and continuous flaunting of international statutes, on the other, have for long been seen to be in most of the Arab countries, and especially in the traditional monarchies, as the most serious international challenges to their security and political stability. Al-'Idarous (1993) argued that the GCC member states were divided in their reactions to, and perceptions of, the origin and nature of the serious challenges facing them. While some of these states regarded the Soviet threat as the major challenge to their security, others saw the US and its manoeuvres to affirm its hegemony in the region as the real threat. Tripp (1995) claimed that the GCC states became highly alarmed by such internal developments as the growth of an



Islamic movement as well as the growing strength of national oppositions in some other Arab states.

The GCC states' uneasiness towards the threats posed by the Communist bloc and Islamic movements was also cited by the elite sample in their reactions to questions bearing on the rise of the GCC. Nearly 40% of the GCC officials citing the role of 'other international factors' in the arise of the GCC, included such political factors as the emergence of regional and international blocs, the power-politics of a new world order, and the ineffectiveness of the Arab League. More than 58.1% of this same sub-sample thought that security concerns ensuing from the superpowers' struggle for supremacy in the Gulf and the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan were involved in the establishment of the GCC.

To recapitulate so far, the majority of the GCC political elite in this study considered internal reasons as having played a much more important role than external factors in the emergence of the GCC as a regional alliance. In terms of the internal factors, the elite were mostly of the opinion that it was the desire of the rulers (sheikhs) that was the most significant reason for the creation of the GCC; conversely, the desire of citizens was seen as of much less importance. Of external 'push' factors, the sample was largely agreed on the Iranian threat as the most effective factor in the establishment of the GCC and on the emergence of Western and other regional blocs and alliances (e.g., NATO, EEC, etc.), while the Cold War confrontation between the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR, in pursuit of political influence and leverage in the region was considered a second important 'push' factor.

### **8.3 The GCC's Achievements: Elite Perceptions**

This part examines the elite perceptions of and attitudes towards the aims of GCC, the organisation's achievements so far and the various problems facing it. It will also evaluate the sample's perceptions of some of the GCC most important policies.



### Aims of GCC:

As is outlined in the organisation's charter and as pointed out in a great deal of the literature dealing with the GCC (see, among others, Angell (1987)), the GCC's central goals is to create a supranational organisation with independent judicial and legislative entities and bodies. The basic objectives of the GCC as per charter Article 4 are:

- I. To work towards ensuring coordination and integration among the peoples and institutions of the member states.
- II. To intensify and strengthen relations, links and cooperation among the member states in various fields.
- III. To harmonise policies in various fields including, most notably, the following:
  1. Economic and financial sectors.
  2. Commerce, customs and communications.
  3. Education and culture.
  4. Social and health sectors.
  5. Information and tourism.
  6. Legislative and administrative affairs.
- IV. To stimulate scientific and technological progress in the fields of industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources; to cooperate in scientific research; to establish joint ventures in economic, educational and scientific sectors and encourage cooperation by the private sector for the good of the member states' peoples.

Angell (1987) asserted that the GCC objectives were ambitious and to that extent would be difficult to realise. Others were critical of the progress that the GCC has made so far in pursuit of its charter objectives. According to al-Kuwari (1992), for instance, the GCC has yet to achieve any of the aims outlined in the founding charter of the organisation. He also noted that part of the difficulty in achieving any of these aims lies in the fact that its aims are inherently ill-defined and somewhat vague.

The GCC political elite's responses to the question 'What do you think are the main aims of the GCC and in what order of importance would you rank them?' were



pooled, and classified into four major categories. Answers listing such matters as cooperation in the field of foreign affairs, coordination of foreign policies and the harmonisation of foreign policy positions were grouped under the broad category of 'political cooperation'. A second broad category of objectives is "social and cultural cooperation", grouping answers listing such concerns as cooperation in scientific fields, establishment of joint scientific and technological ventures, and coordination of education, health, and communications policies. A third category is "economic cooperation", grouping answers listing cooperation in the fields of imports, exports, oil policies and customs. A fourth and final category of GCC objectives was 'security cooperation'. Grouped under this category were answers citing coordination in military and security fields, organisation of joint military exercises, and exchange of intelligence information about terrorist and subversive groups.

As is illustrated by Figure (8.2), slightly over half (51%) of elite's responses listed 'political cooperation' as the most important aim of the GCC. 26.2% of the sample's responses identified 'social cooperation' as the most important objectives of the GCC and 14.1% perceived 'economic cooperation' as a major priority objective of this organisation. Only 8.7% of the sample thought of "security cooperation" as a major aim of the GCC.

Most notable about the responses of the sample as to what the GCC's officials regard as the most important aim of the GCC is a general reluctance to explicitly admit to the fact that security and security concerns are and remain at the heart of this organisation's objectives and creation. In his discussion of official reluctance to publicly acknowledge security cooperation as one of the main GCC concerns, Nakhleh(1986: 6) stated that "[t]he primary focus in the GCC agreement was on economic cooperation; security was not, at least publicly, a concern uppermost in the minds of the framers."



Figure 8.2 The Political Elite's Perceptions of Aims of GCC

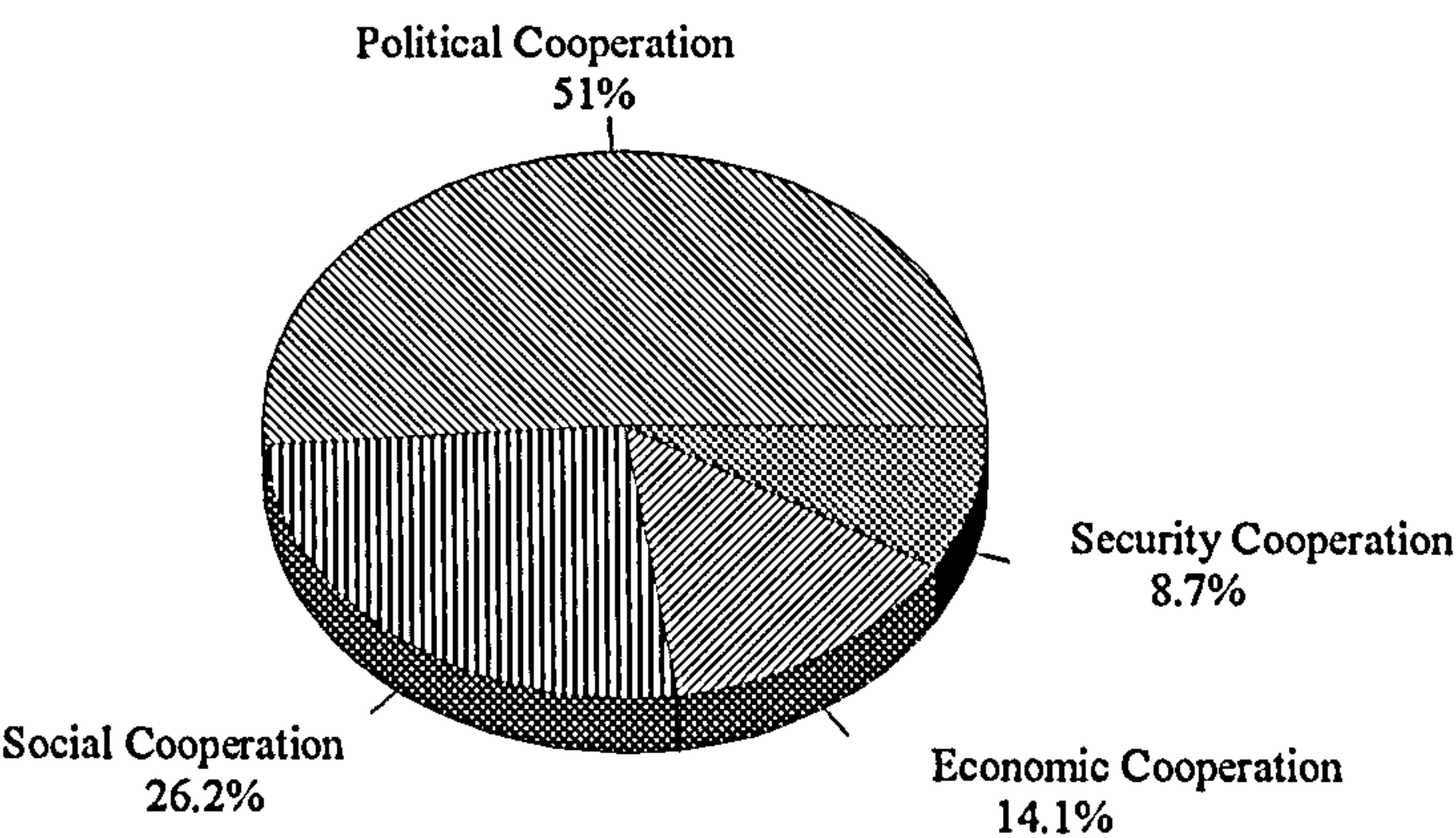


Table 8.3 The most important Goals of the GCC by Nationality:

Nationality	★Goals of the GCC			
	Political Cooperation	Social Cooperation	Economic Cooperation	Security Cooperation
Bahrain	15.6	18.8	15.6	50
Oman	44.6	55.6	0	0
Qatar	40	60	0	0
Saudi Arabia	52	26.5	13.3	8.4

★The respondents were asked to rank their Answers 1. Very Important..... 4. Least Important

As is evident from Table (8.3), the various sub-samples differ in terms of what they perceive to be the most important aim(s) of the GCC. While the Bahraini officials perceived cooperation in the ‘security’ field as the most important of the GCC objectives, the Saudi officials saw cooperation in the ‘political’ field as the most important. The Omani and Qatari officials differ from both the Saudis and Bahrainis in that they saw cooperation in the ‘social’ sectors to be the most important of the aims of the GCC.

Clearly, perceptions of the GCC aims vary. This variation might be attributed to a tendency on the part of the GCC officials' to endorse their governments' official positions and, perhaps also, to reflect the somewhat vague nature of the GCC aims. For example, one GCC official (Gulf Elite (2)) asserted that the GCC aims are not a “*fait accompli*” and that there could be no long-term GCC aims because, on the one



hand, the region's continually changing circumstances require a continuous redefinition of these aims and, on the other, individual member states tend to interpret and understand the GCC charter aims in a manner best compatible with their own interests. Another top executive (Gulf Elite (1)) argued that the GCC aims were defined at a critical era and that both the aims and mechanisms of this organisation are bound to inevitably change and adapt in line with the transformations of, and changes imposed by, the new world order, and the shifting politics of the region.

The GCC's pursuit of its charter aims and objectives continue to be bedevilled by the long-standing and unresolved conflict between member states. Disputes among several of the GCC member countries, including border conflicts between Bahrain and Qatar, Qatar and Saudi Arabia and between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, remain an obstacle in the way of achieving these aims. McLachlan (1994) claimed that external intervention and involvement in these disputes, such as that of Iran during the 1992 border dispute between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, compounded and marred inter-state relations within the GCC. He also pointed out that the border disputes between the two countries opened the way for political rapprochement between Qatar, a GCC member state, and Iran, an avowed adversary of the GCC. The political rapprochement between Qatar and Iran in 1993 was seen by some GCC members as a threat and as conflicting with and undercutting the GCC aims. Border disputes among the GCC member states continues to be a source of much tension among these states and a clear obstacle to the realisation of the GCC charter objectives.

### **GCC Accomplishments:**

As part of measuring the overall achievements of the GCC, the survey questionnaire required the political elite to specify in what way the member states had benefited from the establishment of the GCC.

The responses obtained from the sample with regard to the question 'What do you think are the (main) benefits of the GCC (for the member states) and in what order of importance would you rank these benefits?' were grouped and categorised

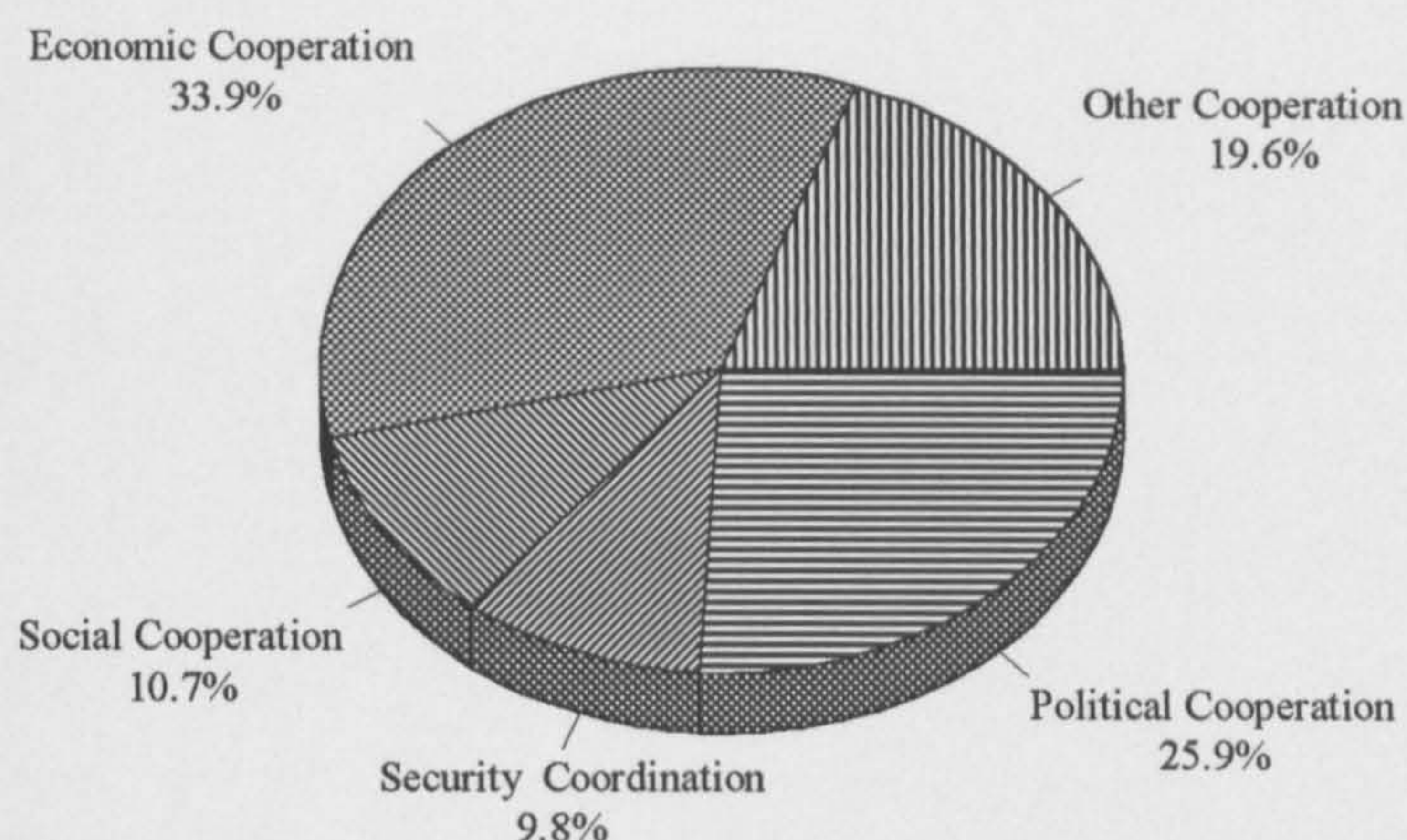


into several broad categories (of perceived benefits). A first broad category was that of “economic cooperation”, under which category were subsumed answers citing the signing of an economic treaty, coordination in the economic sector, the setting up of joint economic ventures, and the ratification of policies related to export and import issues, including the establishment of a free trade zone. A second category was that of “social cooperation”. Grouped under this category were the sample's answers listing policies and ventures designed to increase the rapprochement and reinforce the ties between the various peoples of the GCC community. “Security coordination and cooperation”, grouping answers citing the member states' cooperation in the military field and coordination of internal and external security policies, was the third major category of perceived benefits. The fourth category, “political cooperation”, grouped answers citing cooperation in the various political fields and coordination of policies with the aim of harmonising the stance to international affairs and political institutions. Under the fifth category of perceived benefits, “other cooperation”, included such matters as cooperation on issues related to domestic legislation and Islamic common law, and the exchange of expertise.

As Figure (8.3) reveals, over 30% of the total sample thought the main benefit of the GCC for member states was “coordination in the economic sector”. For 25% of the total responses, “coordination in political” fields emerged as the second main benefit perceived by the sample to have followed from the establishment of the GCC. The third main benefit to the member states from the creation of the GCC, from the point of view of the GCC officials, was “other cooperation”. 19.6% of the total responses listed 'other cooperation' as the area in which the GCC has benefited the member states.



**Figure 8.3 The GCC Policy-Makers' Perceptions of their Organisation's main Accomplishments**



Clearly, the agreement on 'economic cooperation' as the most important achievement of the GCC is understandable in view of some prominent characteristics of the member states of the organisation: as most of the GCC member states are major oil-producing countries and totally dependent on oil production, it is only natural that coordination of policies bearing on oil production, prices and other related issues would be seen as a priority.

### **GCC Problems:**

Like any regional or international organisation, the GCC is faced with considerable problems and challenges. The nature and gravity of the internal, regional, and international problems that has faced the GCC in the past, and which continue to face it, have been the subject of much discussion. While the majority of political analysts argue that the problems that have afflicted the GCC since its inception are thwarting it from extending cooperation among the member states, a few have asserted that, unless resolved quickly, some of the problems facing the GCC are so grave that they could jeopardise the GCC itself (see among others, Ommer (1993), al-Hawari (1993)).



To the elite sample the most important problem hindering the GCC in its pursuit of political cooperation and the harmonisation of policies among its member states, has been the failure to evolve a “collective sovereignty” among the states. This reflects in turn the persistence of state sovereignty and the prioritisation of self-interests over common interests and concerns (e.g., al-Kuwari 1992). Each country has, at one time or another, tried to impose its own policies on the rest of the organisation's members in the belief that these policies would benefit them all.

According to many of the political elite, the prioritisation of 'individual sovereignty' over all other concerns by each GCC country and the reluctance of these states to moderate their policies in light of the interests of other GCC countries has been at the root of many of the problems hampering coordination. For one GCC official (Gulf Elite (3)), sovereignty-related problems are some of the most intractable dilemmas confronting the GCC: “no one state is ready to relinquish part of its sovereignty for the sake of the [greater] union, and, as a consequence, questions of sovereignty and related problems have excluded the adoption of many significant and cooperation-enhancing decisions.” For the same official, 'collective sovereignty' is a prerequisite for meaningful and extensive cooperation. For another GCC official, (Gulf Elite (1)), the GCC countries need to evolve and develop the sense of a 'collective sovereignty' for they “have to bear in mind that, individually, the sovereignty of each Gulf state is not tenable”.

The second most important problem encountered by the GCC, is the Voting System. The right of veto and its exercise by member states of the GCC undermines the feasibility of cooperation. According to one GCC official (Gulf Elite (4)), the insistence on unanimity has prevented the GCC from reaching major decisions or resolutions: “One of the obstacles encountered [by the GCC] is the insistence on unanimity which always impedes adoption of major resolutions.” According to another official (Gulf Elite (2)), because of the distinction made within the GCC between advisory and mandatory resolutions, some of the resolutions adopted by this political body have never been implemented or are yet to be implemented by the member states.



As noted in chapter 4, implementation of GCC resolutions and policies are left to the discretion of the member states; members are not under any obligation to carry out all or any of the GCC resolutions. 'Failure to implement the organisation's policies and resolutions' on the part of the member states is, as the sample elite is concerned, is a major problem.

The fourth most important perceived problem are the "incompatibility of interests" among the member states of the organisation and the conflict that inevitably result from these differences. The advantage of grouping a number of member states, the majority of which are major oil producing countries, has in fact at times proven a liability owing to the GCC states' failure to adopt or subscribe to a unified oil policy, especially with regard to oil prices. One GCC official (Gulf Elite (2)) also argued that one of the problems facing the GCC is the failure to agree on and fix a common tariff rate among the member states. 'Aggressive economic competition' among the member states and their pursuit of national interests also constitute, in the view of the GCC sample, a major problem for the GCC. According to one GCC official (Gulf Elite (2)), incompatibility of economic interests is one of the major problems that will continue to hamper the GCC; he stated that "Qatar and Oman, for example, are concerned that oil prices should remain constantly high, while other bigger GCC oil producing countries are mainly concerned that oil prices should remain stable". The view that emerged from the attitudes obtained from the sample was that, unless each member state is willing, even to a degree, to subordinate national interests to the common interests of all member states, the GCC will continue to face intractable problems.

Figure (8.4) schematises the perceived problems facing the GCC. 42.4% of the elite sample were of the view that the most prominent of the problems facing the GCC have been of a political nature and include, most notably, border disputes, questions of sovereignty, differences in internal policies, and variation in political predispositions. The second most important problem confronting the organisation is the persistent failure of the member states to implement the organisation's policies and resolutions. Nearly a third of the sample subscribed to the view that a major block (in the way of the organisation) is the GCC Charter's requirement for unanimity to pass resolutions as well as the lack of any effective machinery to ensure implementation of



those few resolutions which have been adopted. “Economic policies and economic cooperation”-related obstacles are, according to the GCC officials, the third most important problem impeding the progress of the GCC. 13.1% of the total sample thought that the major problem lies in the field of economic cooperation and coordination of economic policies and that such a problem is a result of an incompatibility of interests, aggressive economic competition among the various member states and a failure on the part of these states to reach agreements on, among others, common custom tariffs. Overall, these perceptions were shared regardless of nationality (Table 8.4).

Figure 8.4 Sample's Perceptions of GCC Problems

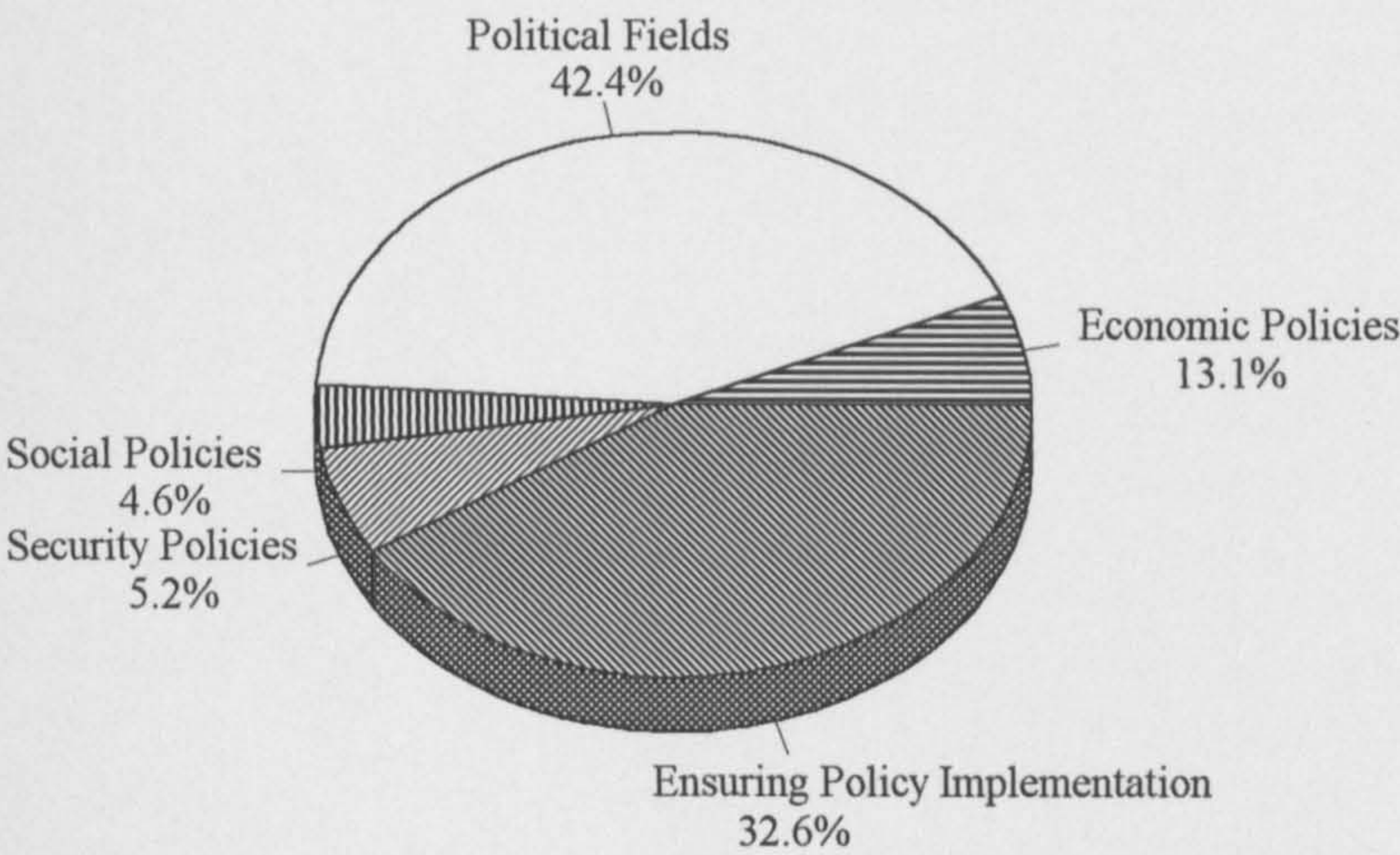


Table 8.4 Perceived GCC Problems by Nationality:

Nationality	n	☆Problems by Sector Type				
		Economic	Political	Social	Security	Ensuring Policy Implementation
Bahrain	7	7.2	46.4	0	0	46.4
Oman	3	15.2	62.5	0	12.5	12.5
Qatar	2	28.6	28.6	14.2	0	28.6
Saudi Arabia	26	4.2	40.6	4.2	8.3	42.7

☆The respondents were asked to rank their Answers 1. Very Important..... 4. Least Important

As is clear from Table (8.4), the Saudi officials ranked problems in the “Ensuring Policy Implementation” as the most important of the problems facing the GCC. According to the Qatari and Bahraini officials also the major problem confronting the GCC as an organisation is failure of the member states to “implement



the GCC Charter". All other problems featuring in Table 8.8 were regarded by the GCC officials as less important than either the political or the economic problems. All officials interviewed claimed that most of the serious problems arose especially after the Gulf war and that the most serious of all these problems were the "border disputes" and the conflicts these had generated over the years among the member states. Yet these border disputes, it is worth noting, have been of long standing and were a legacy of the colonial period if not before.

The intractability of the border question has often strained relations among the GCC member states. The confrontation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia over *al-Khafius* in late 1992 raised serious questions about the authority of the GCC. McLachlan (1994:235) argued that the Qatari-Saudi clash over unresolved border questions led to a shift in Qatari politics towards a tacit support for Iran in areas where it felt it could and would disadvantage other GCC partners. Certainly, the conflicts and problems stemming from "border disputes" have dogged the GCC since its inception. It was pointed out in the literature (see, for instance, Schofield (1994)) that Qatar did not sign the GCC security treaty (submitted to the GCC in 1982) because of its border dispute with Saudi Arabia and that the persistence of these disputes is both a reflection and a result of the conflict and tension that characterise inter-state relations within the GCC.

### **Some GCC Policies: An Assessment**

This final section considers the political elite's evaluation of a variety of GCC policies. It will, in particular, consider the sample's evaluation of the policies listed in the survey questionnaire, i.e. foreign policies, economic policies, and social policies, with the aim of establishing the extent of cooperation and level of policy coordination among the member states in the various fields.

### **Evaluation of GCC Policies:**

The policies cover nearly all fields of cooperation among the GCC member states. The officials evaluated two sub-categories of foreign policy: under two



headings, those dealing with global issues (e.g., policies bearing on oil production, international crises, relations with the USA, Russia, the CIS, and with such economic alliances as EEC) and, those at the regional scale (e.g., policies bearing on internal security and defence, the Israeli question, Iranian threat, Iraq before the Second Gulf War and after, and the Yemeni crisis). The respondents were asked also to evaluate a number of GCC 'internal' policies, including, in particular, social policies (e.g., policies in regard to health, education and immigration), economic policies (e.g., common tariffs agreements, and export and import policies) and, finally, environmental policies (e.g., policies on pollution and environment protection).

### Foreign Policies:

On the whole, the GCC officials found the general level of cooperation among the GCC member states in the field of foreign policy 'highly satisfactory'. According to 67.4% of the total political elite sample investigated in this work, there has been 'considerable' cooperation among the GCC member states in the field of foreign policies with a global perspective. Such a relatively high level of satisfaction among the GCC officials is not entirely unexpected; the Gulf political elite is known for its conservatism, conformity and strong sense of loyalty to political leadership. As is clear from Table 8.5 in Appendix B, 66.5% of the total sample of GCC officials characterised cooperation among the GCC member states in the area of foreign policy with a regional perspective as "considerable" and 75.5% of these officials thought that there has been 'considerable' cooperation among these states in the area of GCC internal policies.

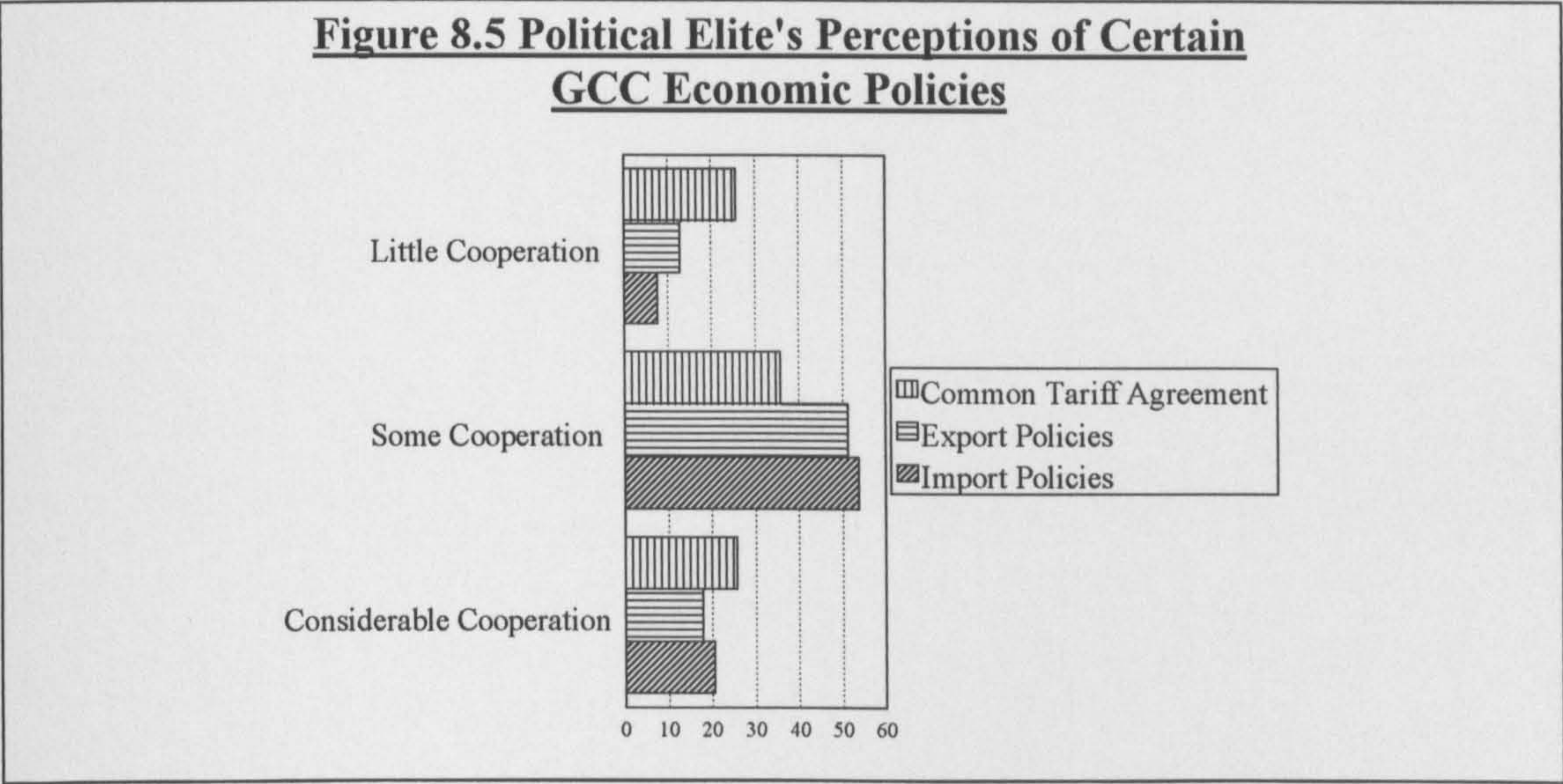
According to the GCC officials, cooperation among the GCC member states in all fields of foreign policy has been fruitful. A similar evaluation of the level and significance of cooperation among the GCC state is generally projected by the Gulf political elite in interviews with the media in the GCC states.



Economic Policies:

According to most of the GCC officials, only “some” cooperation (see Figure (8.5)) among the GCC member states in the area of economic policies relating to such matters as a common tariff (e.g., rate tax on foreign products) and common regulations on export (e.g. oil, gas, other chemical products) and import (food, cars, electrical and mechanical goods) has been achieved to date. In general, GCC officials argued that economic cooperation had been limited - as one said “Each GCC state is strongly seeking to convince its partners of the viability of its economic policies”.

Another official (Gulf Elite (3)) asserted that the member states had failed to capitalise on the positive aspects and advantages of the GCC, especially in regard to economic cooperation and coordination of economic policies. He also asserted that indeed the economic problems facing member states have often not been brought up for collective discussion.



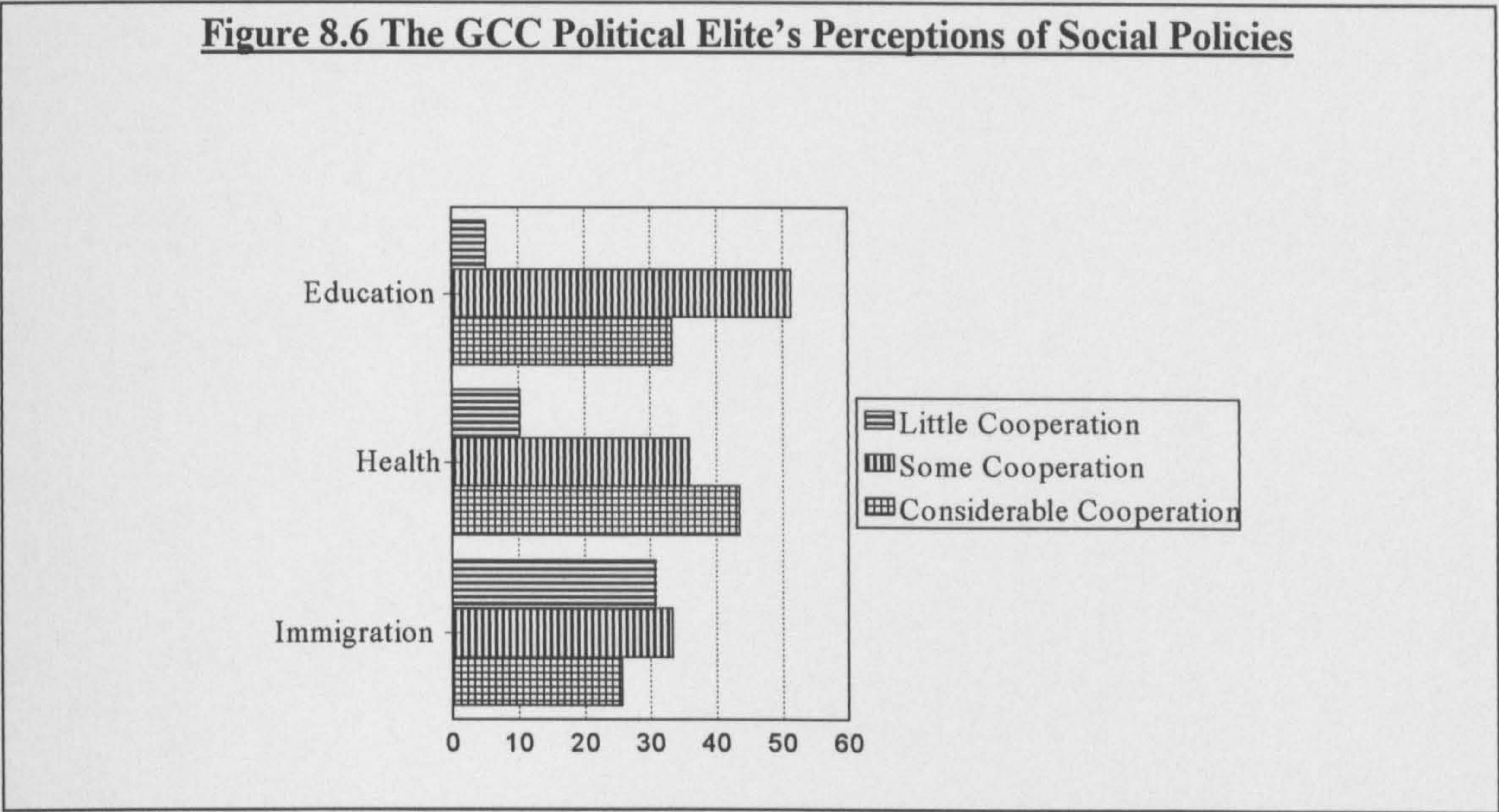
The attitudinal patterns of the sample revealed significant variation in terms of the nationality of the officials. While Bahraini officials agreed that there has been 'little



cooperation' among the GCC member states, especially in regard to common tariffs, the Omani officials thought that cooperation in this area has been “considerable”.

Social Policies:

The GCC officials' attitudes towards the GCC social policies were varied. The sample thought that there has been only 'some' cooperation among the member states in the two sectors of education and immigration. In contrast, and as figure (8.6) indicates, the political elite assumed that 'considerable' cooperation had been achieved by the GCC states in the sector of health.



The majority of the Saudi officials thought that “some” cooperation has been achieved among the GCC countries with regard to health policies. The Qatari officials were evenly divided in their views as to how much cooperation had been achieved in the education sector: one half of the Qatari officials believed that there had been “considerable” cooperation among the GCC member states in the education domain whereas the other half thought that only 'some' cooperation had been achieved in this sector. Both Bahraini and Qatari officials thought that the cooperation achieved in matters relating to immigration had been “considerable” (see Table (8.5)).



Table 8.5 Described the Assessment of Social Policies by Nationality:

1. Health Policy:

Nationality	n	*Level of Cooperation		
		Little Cooperation	Some Cooperation	Considerable Cooperation
Bahrain	6	16.7	33.3	50
Oman	2	0	0	100
Qatar	2	0	0	100
Saudi Arabia	24	8.3	50	41.7

2. Education Policies:

Nationality	n	*Level of Cooperation		
		Little Cooperation	Some Cooperation	Considerable Cooperation
Bahrain	6	0	66.7	33.3
Oman	3	0	50	50
Qatar	2	0	50	50
Saudi Arabia	24	4.5	59.1	36.4

3. Immigration Policies:

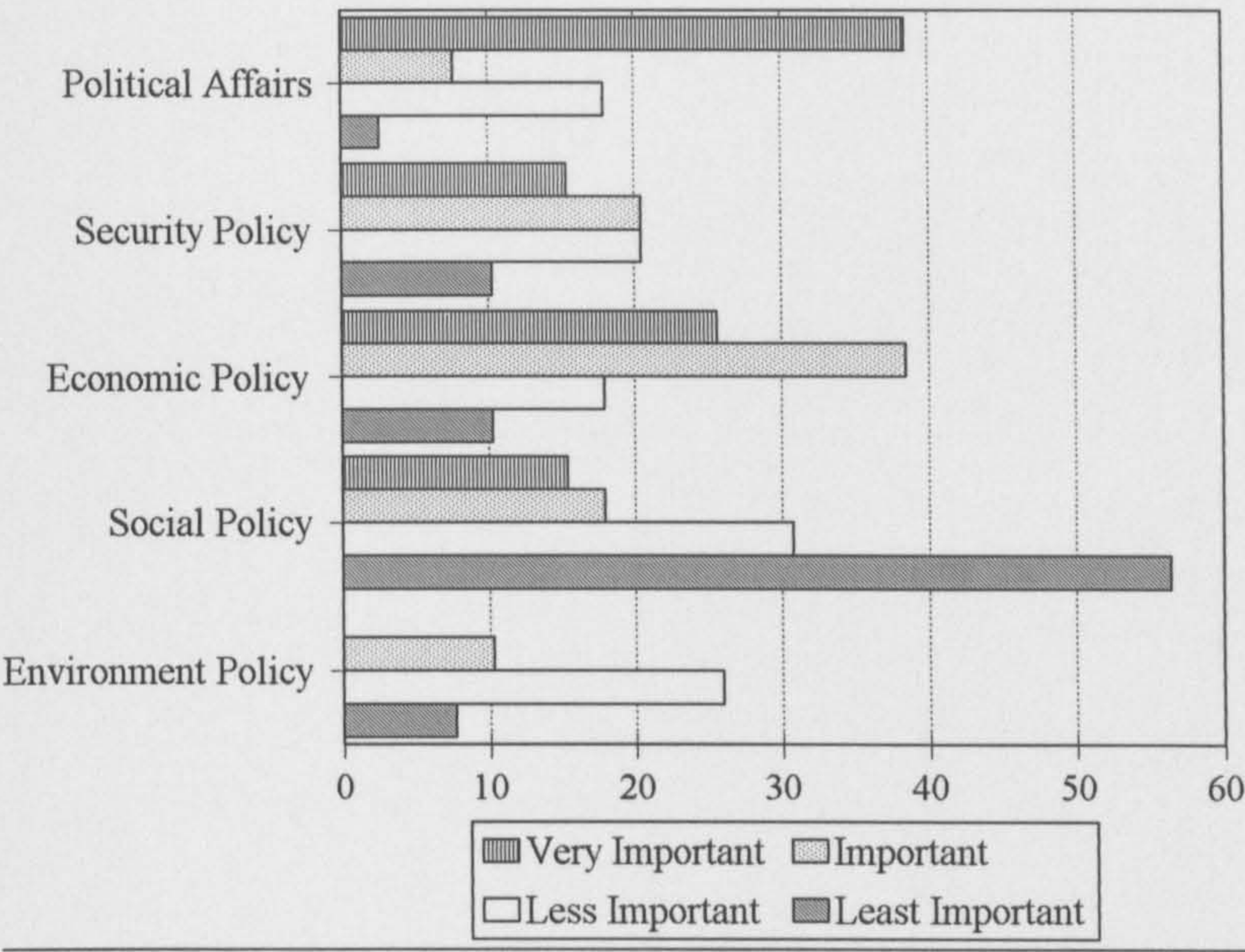
Nationality	n	*Level of Cooperation		
		Little Cooperation	Some Cooperation	Considerable Cooperation
Bahrain	6	33.3	33.3	33.3
Oman	3	66.7	33.3	0
Qatar	2	0	50	50
Saudi Arabia	24	34.8	39.1	26.1

B. Four Important Policies

Just over a third of the sample's (38.5%) regarded GCC policies in the area of “political affairs” as the organisation’s ‘most important’ policies. The same proportion identified “economic policy” as an ‘important’ GCC policy. As 'political affairs' were perceived by the GCC officials as the area presenting the most intractable problems for the GCC, it is not surprising that the same officials would choose 'political affairs' as the organisation’s most important area of policy. Over half (56.4%) of the sample rated social policy as a ‘least important’ area of GCC policy. The interesting thing in this regard is that though the GCC officials deemed security policy as one of the most important policies, they never ranked it as one of the four most important GCC policies. Figure (8.7) shows the sample’s perceptions of the importance of the four selected GCC policies.



**Figure 8.7 Political Elite's Perceptions of the Importance of the Four Selected GCC Policies**



The GCC political elite's concern with political affairs and cooperation in this area could be understood as part of an awareness on the part of this class of Gulf citizenry that successful and fruitful cooperation in other fields is totally dependent on and only possible within an environment of political cooperation and political entente.

**8.4 Conclusions:**

This chapter has focused on the attitudes and perceptions of the political elite to the GCC, its political machinery, the 'push' factors contributing to its emergence, its policies, its accomplishments and the problems it has faced in the past or has been facing since its inception. Focusing on a sample drawn from Saudi, Omani, Qatari and Bahraini GCC officials, and using both face-to-face interviews and survey questionnaires as methods of data gathering, it was found that the political elites' perceptions of and attitudes towards the organisation and the other issues cited above are substantially different from those expressed by Gulf citizens (see Chapters 11 and 12). Critical here is that the 'desire of the GCC leadership' played the most important factor in the rise of the regional alliance for the elite. This, as will become apparent from subsequent chapters, contrasts with the perceptions and attitudes expressed by



the majority of the citizens' sample. According to the latter, it is the factor of 'social similarities', rather than the "desire" of the GCC leadership that has played a most significant role in the emergence of the GCC.

As to the role of external factors in the establishment of the GCC, it was found that the majority of the political elite sample was agreed that the security factor and concerns for external security was the most important and effective factor in the arise of the GCC and that the Iranian/Iraqi war was the most important factor behind the Arabian Gulf leadership's resolution to create the GCC. This, as will become obvious from chapter 11 and 12, contrasts somewhat markedly with the perceptions and attitudes of the citizens' sample. Only a minority of this sample considered that (concerns over) external security were of critical importance in inducing the emergence of the GCC.

An important point to note is how markedly different the views and perceptions of the elite sample investigated here are from what is judged to be true by independent political observers of the GCC and its evolution. While they agree that inter-state border disputes and member states' persistent prioritisation of their national interests over collective interests, are the most prominent and intractable of the major problems that have faced the GCC in the past and continue to frustrate greater cooperation and coordination of policies among its members, the views of our political elite sample and those expressed by numerous political observers (see, e.g. al-Kuwari (1992), Obeid (1996)) were nevertheless found to diverge considerably. First, the political elite's views that the GCC's main concern should be extensive economic cooperation conflicts with the view widely held among independent researchers (and citizens for that matter) that the GCC's function should be mainly oriented towards political and social cooperation. Second, the political elite's view that 'some cooperation' has been attained in the various economic, political, social, and cultural sectors does not tally with the widely accepted view among scholars of the GCC. According to many (see, e.g. al-'Esa, (1993), Abdul-Ruhman (1997)), hardly any significant progress has been achieved so far in any of the most important fields of cooperation, a reality that is best illustrated by the fact that most of the policies and



resolutions adopted by the GCC have not been enforced across the board or have yet to be implemented by any of the member states.

This gulf between the political elite and the citizens' views raises important questions about the nature of the policy-making process in the Arabian Gulf states, and the separation of the leadership from the concerns of citizens. Al-'Esa (1981) stressed that confining the GCC political processes to the political elite will continue to rob it of the broad popular support that it needs to achieve its aims. Al-Alkim (1994) argued that the GCC faces two alternatives; either to continue to ignore the wishes of the Gulf citizens and exclude them from the political process and, as a result, continue to face the same intractable problems it has met with since its inception, or open the door for the Gulf citizens to play an active role in the decision- and policy-making process, gaining thereby the wider support it necessarily requires to ensure its continuity and utility.



## ***Chapter Nine:***

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### **Citizen Knowledge of and Interest in GCC Institutions**

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#### **9.1 Introduction:**

**T**his chapter explores how well informed are the sample of citizens of the GCC and its working. It will assess, first, the sample's basic knowledge of the GCC- its date of establishment, the countries constituting this organisation, the location of its headquarters, the makeup of its General Secretariat, its policies, and how often the heads of member states convene. It will also consider the sample's level of awareness and perceptions of these matters and their level of interest in the institution and the sources relied on for obtaining information about it. An evaluation of how knowledgeable the sample is about the GCC and its operation will enable us to (i) determine how much interaction and interplay there is between such a political institution and the citizens of its member states, (ii) how much importance is given to it, and, finally, (iii) how open the GCC is about its policies and how effective it is in disseminating information bearing on its activities.

#### **9.2. Knowledge & its Importance in Study of Perceptions:**

A person's knowledge of a political issue or institution is widely assumed to act as a barometer of their interest and/or concern. Assessment of our sample's perceptions and knowledge of the GCC and matters connected with this regional grouping will allow us to specify, on the one hand, the level of importance this institution has among citizens and, on the other, their level of interest in it.



Assessment of how people are affected (or disaffected) by political institutions is initially measured by their basic knowledge of how such institutions work, e.g., by the citizens' ability to name leading politicians, headquarters of the most important institutions, and, most importantly, its policies. Oppenheim (1992) emphasised the role of 'knowledge questions' as an important tool for studies seeking to uncover perceptions and awareness.

We focus here on the sample's awareness of various aspects of the GCC's history and make-up for two main related reasons. First, knowledge is a measure of awareness. The sample's awareness of the GCC's history, constituency, leadership, and other related matters, will, in turn, provide a reference point in terms of which it is possible to gauge the importance of this political institution to the selected sample. The basic research strategy was to obtain people's awareness of certain GCC issues prior to seeking their perceptions of those issues so that the relationship between the level of awareness, and the nature and types of perceptions could be systematised and foregrounded.

### 9.3. Basic Citizen Knowledge of the GCC:

Basic knowledge of the GCC was tested through asking questions on the organisation's date of establishment, its constituent members, the location of its Secretariat General, the number of its summits held each year, and, finally, the nationality of its current Secretary General.

Not unexpectedly, the sample's awareness of the six constituent members of the GCC was very high indeed. 99% of the total sample identified correctly the six countries making up the organisation. Moreover, the sample was aware of the nationality of the GCC Secretary General; with three quarters able to identify his nationality correctly. Given that the sample consisted wholly of university students - and thus of an educated elite- the high level of awareness shown by the sample was



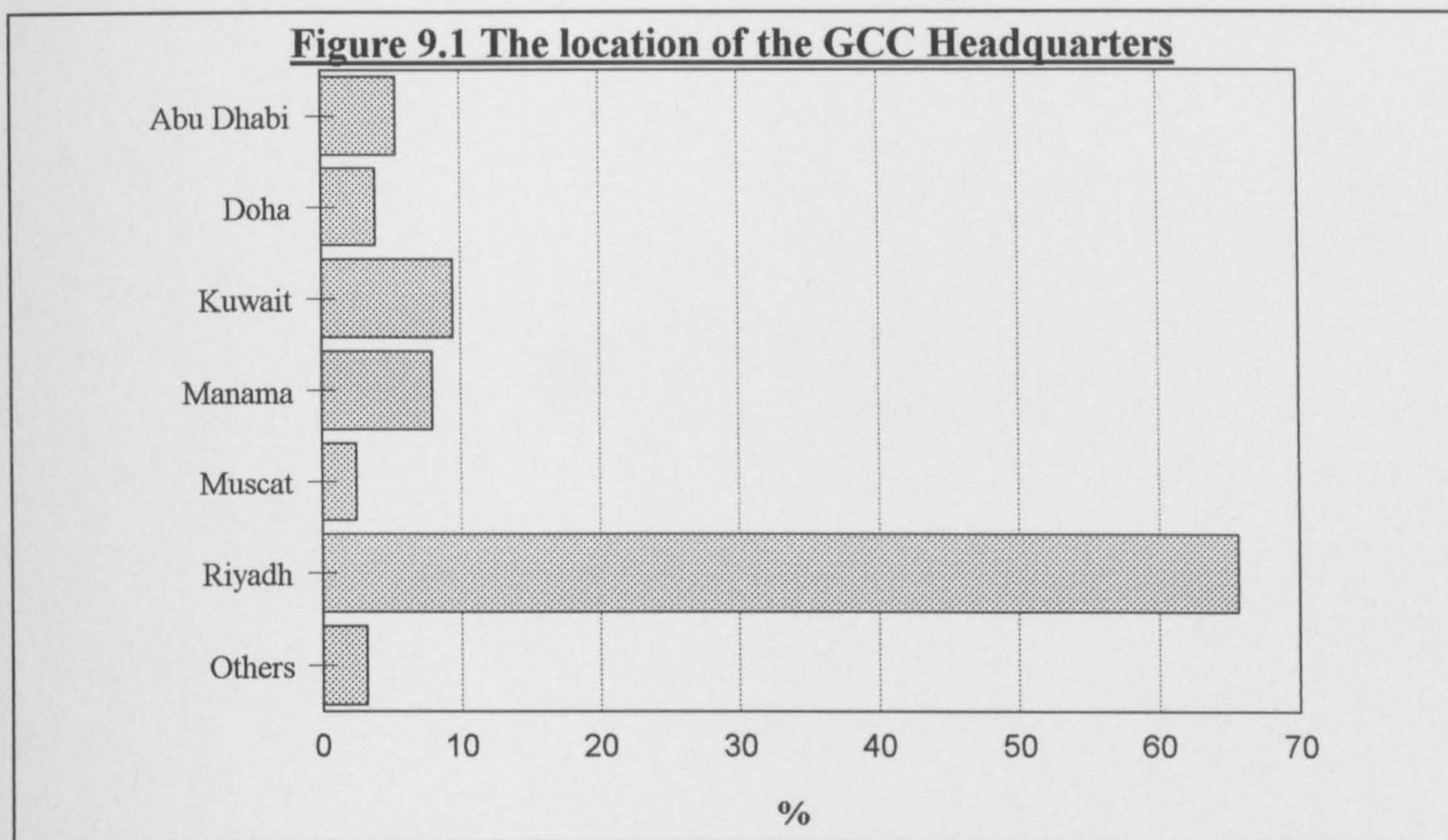
not in any way unexpected. The role of information sources, as detailed below, is also largely responsible for our sample's high awareness of the various aspects of the GCC as a political institution. Table (9.1) illustrates.

**Table 9.1 The knowledge of the Sample Measured:**

Variables	Frq		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
GCC Six Countries	584	5	99	0.8
Nationality of Secretary General	445	140	75.4	23.7
Interest in News about the GCC	378	211	64.1	35.8

The location of the GCC Secretariat General was queried as part of an effort to determine how detailed was the sample’s knowledge of the GCC institutions. As figure (9.1) shows, no less than 65.6% of the total sample knew where the GCC headquarters (i.e., GCC Secretariat General) were based. Contributing to the sample's high level of awareness of the location of this institution is probably the fact that the regular GCC meetings at this organisation’s Secretariat General in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, tend to be highly publicised in the local media. Riyadh was chosen as a location for the GCC Secretariat General largely on account of Saudi Arabia being the largest and most influential of the member states.





Since its inception, the GCC has hardly been out of the news within the GCC states; its progress, policies, committee meetings, summits, and problems are frequently covered by the local media. The appointment of the Secretary General in 1995 gave rise to a dispute between member states and was widely reported upon. The dispute was eventually solved through Omani mediation, with Saudi Arabia assuming the post for the next four years. Referring to the atmosphere of conflict that characterised the GCC during the dispute between Qatar and Saudi Arabia as to who should be appointed Secretary General during the 1995 summit in Muscat, Ali (in *Issues and Opinions* (1996) wrote that “During more than three months, the Gulf citizens closely followed the conflict over the appointing of a new Secretary General [...]”. It was in the aftermath of the settlement of this dispute, and at a time when the newly appointed Secretary General was being widely reported upon by the media throughout the Gulf region, that the sample was asked about the nationality of the Secretariat General. In view of these considerations, it is not surprising that as many as 75.4% of the total sample were able to determine the correct nationality of the newly anointed Secretary General. These results shed some interesting light on two important issues. First, they show that there may be a high level of awareness among citizens of the GCC institutions, signalling the potential for a positive relationship between the organisation and its citizenry. Second, they confirm the role ‘knowledge

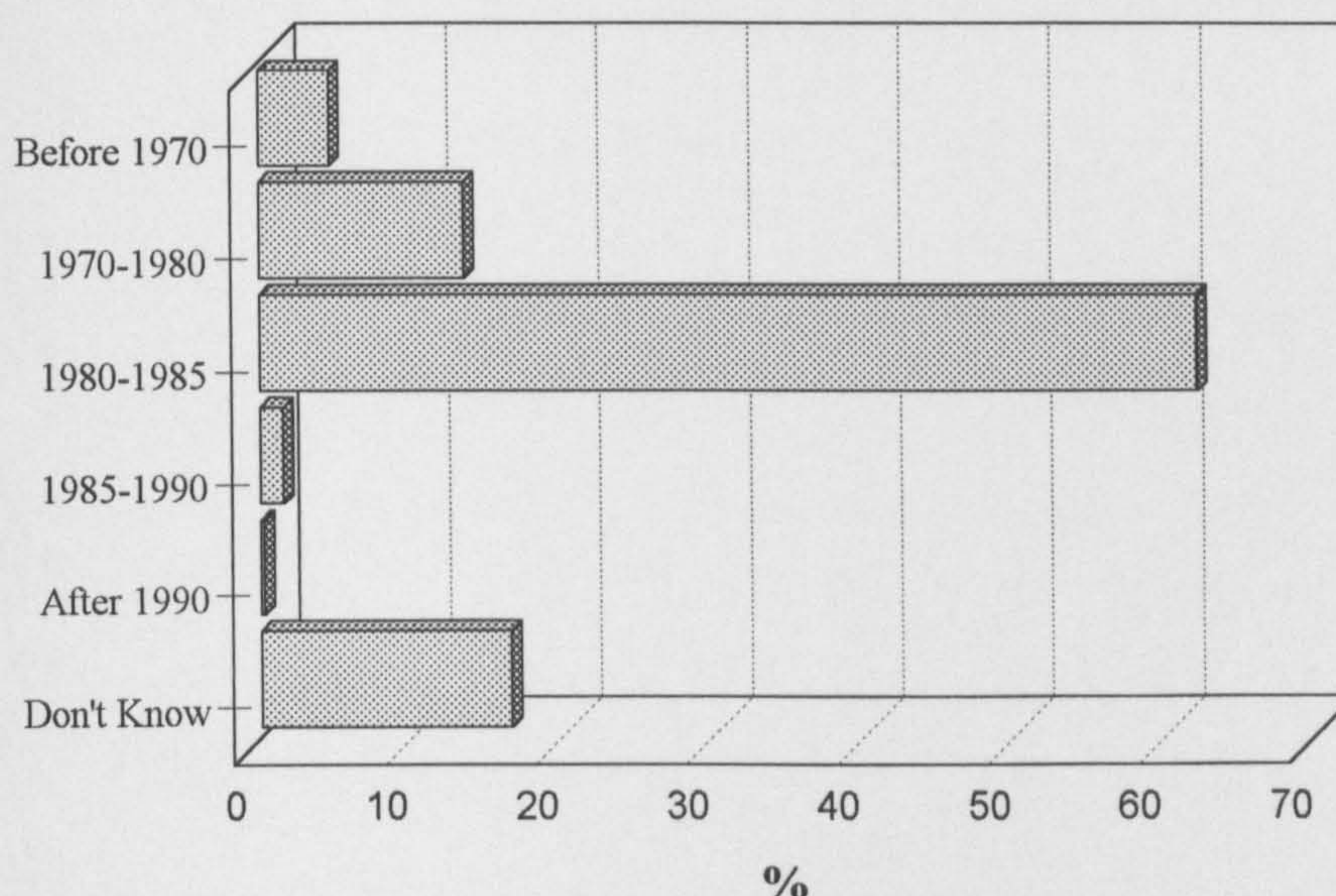


questions' have providing awareness of the various aspects associated with the GCC (see, for instance, Oppenheim 1992).

More difficulty was evident amongst the sample in correctly identifying the date of the GCC's establishment. Some 62.2% of the total sample were able to identify the correct answer, (indicated in the questionnaire as [1980-1985]). In part this is no doubt because of the sample, particularly at the time the GCC was established; even so a clear majority associated with the political events of the early 1980s.

The part of the questionnaire bearing on the sample's knowledge of the GCC and its institutions included one last question requiring the sample to specify exactly how many GCC meetings are held every year. As Figure (9.3) illustrates, most (87.8%) of the total sample provided correct answers to this question. Such meetings are widely reported in the media, though the proportion giving the correct answer is indicative of the importance attached to the GCC.

**Figure 9.2 Citizen Knowledge of Year of GCC Establishment**





#### 9.4 Source of Information on and Interest in the GCC:

The sample was asked about their interest in GCC news, with the objective of shedding light on the level of importance attached to the organisation. More than 64.1% of the total sample followed the GCC news (e.g., of Supreme Council summits, Ministerial Council meetings, GCC decisions and events, etc.) on a regular basis. Again it is necessary to take account of the characteristics of the sample, most being keen to learn about the progress of the organisation.

The media has an important role in shaping people's perceptions. In his discussion of the media in the Gulf states, Melikian (1988) asserted that, with the exception of Kuwait, there is little press freedom in the GCC countries. However, the media in the GCC member states has witnessed significant changes since 1990. Some of the GCC members changed their policies to cope with the new information technology. Increasing ownership of satellite dishes and the availability of foreign media sources caused most of the GCC states to change their media policies in an attempt to maintain credibility. A consequence of the availability of so-called 'free media' is that citizens began to discuss GCC issues much more freely in male gatherings (known, for instance, in Qatar as *majlis* and in Kuwait as *Dewaniyah*), held at either places of study or at the work place. The newly acquired freedom of the media helped people know more about GCC developments, problems, and internal disputes. The media has in fact become a vital source of information for citizens. As is clear from Table (9.2), many depend heavily on it for information on the GCC. Al-Watan (1997), a Kuwaiti newspaper, asserted that the press constitutes the most essential source of information for Kuwaiti citizens, with TV and radio coming second and third, respectively.



**Table 9.2 Main Sources of Information on the GCC:**

Source	Frq	%
Family	103	13.2
Friends	86	11
Majlis (Dewaniyah)	79	10.1
Media	364	46.7
Place of Study	98	12.6
Place of Work	30	3.8
Other	20	2.6
Total	780	100

Not all were concerned with or interested in the GCC. Those of the sample who pointed out that they were not interested in news of the GCC provided several reasons for their lack of interest in the organisation and information bearing on it. The most typical reasons put forward were:

- ◆ The boring nature of GCC news.
- ◆ The GCC’s lack of credibility.
- ◆ The political bias (non-independence) of all sources of information.
- ◆ The failure of the GCC to realise any tangible achievements benefiting the citizens of the region.

Nearly 35.8% of the total sample showed no interest whatsoever in GCC news. For some the above reasons might be interpreted as indicative of level of alienation from the GCC as a political institution; certainly some were disillusioned with its lack of achievement.



### **9.5 Citizen Perceptions of GCC Main Policy Concerns:**

To determine how much interest the sample sustains in the GCC, its evolution as a political institution and what are generally perceived within Gulf society to be main GCC agenda, the sample was presented with a broad list of policies relating to different domains of cooperation. They were asked to specify which of these policies they think is a major concern of the GCC. The list of policies presented to the sample to evaluate included: defence and security, foreign affairs, health, Immigration, and education.

As Table (9.3) shows, the overwhelming majority -just short of 90%- of the sample thought of common defence and security as a main concern of the GCC. The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was a key factor here. The assumption among the sample is that because of its failure to initially react militarily to avert the Iraqi aggression against one of its member states, the GCC would naturally be pursuing extensive cooperation on matters of common defence and security with a view to protecting the member states from similar future aggression.

Similarly, a clear majority of the sample (just under 75%) considered education policy to form one of the GCC concerns. Education is in fact one of the few areas in which the GCC might be said to have made some definite progress. Besides encouraging and promoting substantial cooperation among GCC universities in the form of, among others, regular colloquia, the GCC states have unified university curricula as well as university entrance requirements (see chapter 12, section 2.4)



**Table 9.3 Citizen Perceptions of certain GCC Policies:**

Policy	Frq			%		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
Common Defence	517	45	16	89.4	7.8	2.8
Foreign Affairs	346	144	73	61.4	25.6	13
Health	304	142	109	54.8	25.6	19.6
Immigration	185	201	159	33.9	36.9	29.2
Education	416	88	57	74.1	15.7	10.2

While just over 51.5% of the sample saw health policy as a major area of concern for the GCC, only 34.1% thought of immigration policy as a main area of interest for the organisation. The results bearing on the issue of immigration policy might be interpreted as indicative of the general conviction that the GCC has yet to realise the full impact of immigration on the economic, political, social and cultural domains in the Gulf states as well as the widespread feeling that the GCC is not doing much to resolve the problem of heavy reliance on an inordinately large and ever-increasing foreign workforce. Al-Rumaihi (1983) pointed out in this regard that the magnitude of the foreign workforce can be the source of major problems for the GCC member states, exerting an impact not only on the geo-political and security aspects of the region, but on its cultural aspects as well.

The sample was also asked to express its views as to whether ‘foreign policy policies’ should be binding on all member states. 49.8% of the sample were of the view that the organisation’s foreign policies should indeed be binding on the member states, while only 29% thought that the GCC member states should not be under any obligation to subscribe to or implement these policies. These results are indicative of the relatively widespread popular desire within Gulf society to see the organisation equipped with effective institutions and mechanisms, thereby transforming it into a fully functioning political institution from its current status of a somewhat ‘symbolic’ political body.



## 9.6 Overview:

This chapter focused on the citizens sample's attitudes towards and knowledge of the GCC, its political institutions and policies, with the aim of determining the level of interest in this organisation as well as the level of importance attributed to it within Gulf society. It was found that the sample was highly informed about the different aspects of the GCC including its policies and that the sample's main source of information on the organisation is the local media. The high level of informadness displayed by the sample with regard to the GCC could reflected the high level of interest shown towards the organisation and the similarly high level of the importance attributed to it within Gulf society.

These results are interesting in two particular respects. First, they reveal a clear preoccupation among the sample with issues of military defence and security. The sample's concern, symptomatic of a wider concern within Gulf society, with these questions is understandable and predictable in view of the recent troubled history of the region. The contemporary history of the region has been characterised by a series of wars (e.g., Arabo-Israeli wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973; the Iran/Iraq war of 1979) and invasions (e.g., Israeli invasion of South Lebanon, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait) that contributed to heightening tensions in what is already a highly volatile region. Second, the results also indicate a clear desire among Gulf citizens to see the GCC political institutions invested with full authority to formulate policies of cooperation and political integration and for its political institutions to be capable of ensuring compliance with the organisation's policies and resolutions.



## ***Chapter Ten:***

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### **Cross-Cutting Social and Cultural Factors & the GCC: Social Ties and Cultural Identity within the Arabian Gulf**

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#### **10.1 Introduction:**

The effect of the major 'push factors' which led to the emergence of the GCC have been addressed previously in this study. It is argued in the relevant literature (e.g. Ramadan, 1993; Qassim, 1993) that, besides these immediate internal and external factors, the formation of the GCC has been assisted by a number of cross-cutting, integrative social, cultural, ethnic and historical factors. Thus, in this argument the underlying cultural unity of the region, the sense of social solidarity and of a common distinctive 'identity' among the citizens of the Arabian Gulf, have played an 'integrative' role in the emergence of the GCC.

The Islamic world, and to a lesser extent, the Arab world, is a conglomerate of different cultures, ethnicities and societies, in which it is argued that its identity can only be understood in terms of its cultural diversity and geographic variation. While this may be true, it is also the case that certain regions of the Arab world manifest considerable cross-state cultural unity and 'societal commonalties'. In this sense to speak of different societies or different cultures is something of a misnomer. This is perhaps nowhere more true than in the states of the Arabian peninsula (i.e., Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain) - the geo-cultural entity broadly known as the "Arabian Gulf". As a group, the states of this region have been argued to exhibit a distinctive 'identity' within the Gulf area and to form a single, and distinctive, cultural unit, distinct from both Arab and non-Arab neighbouring states. There is an underlying unity to the area and a strong sense of fraternity and solidarity among its peoples, a unity and solidarity that is grounded in their strong ethnic, societal, cultural and historical affinities, even if the exact nature of such unity is difficult to define.



This chapter evaluates some of the 'cross-cutting social and cultural factors' that can be linked to the emergence of the GCC through an examination of the intricate network of (socio-cultural) affinities operating across state boundaries in the Gulf region. Besides helping to understand the complex network of cross-GCC social and cultural ties, an evaluation of these 'integrative factors' will go some way towards explaining the underlying 'unity' and 'solidarity' of the region.

The discussion in this chapter, based on a sample survey drawn primarily from the two GCC countries of Kuwait and Qatar, is not meant to make any value judgements about the exact role that socio-cultural unity, solidarity and common identity have played in the emergence of the GCC. Regional politics, much like international politics, are intricate and complex and all inter-state relations are, more or less, controlled by considerations of perceived and potential self-interest. Whether this is valid (or otherwise) in the context of the GCC is not the concern of this discussion. Rather, the discussion is essentially concerned with noting some aspects of the Arabian Gulf societal and cultural unity and examining the network of social ties, and cultural affinities, that account for this unity.

The discussion is organised as follows. The first part examines the network of cross-GCC social and cultural relations through an evaluation of the nature and extent of cross-border societal and cultural ties that exist among the GCC citizens. The discussion in this first part looks at the strength and scope of cross-border family ties, tribal bonds and affiliations and relations of fellowship among the GCC citizens, and the implications and significance of the observed patterns. The network of social relations is adopted as a measure of the level of cultural unity and cohesion within the social fabric of the GCC. The second part is concerned with issues bearing on mobility of Gulf citizens across GCC borders. The discussion in the third part relates to questions of identity among GCC citizens and their implications.



## **10.2 Social Ties among GCC Citizens: Importance and Implications:**

The structuring of social and cultural ties, including familial (blood) relations, across the GCC societies have been extensively discussed elsewhere, (i.e. El-Solh 1997). Most of the studies, however, have approached the importance of these networks of social relations from either an exclusively anthropological or historical perspective. Cole (1975), for instance, discussed the relations between the al-Murrah tribe of the Empty Quarter with the Saudi royal family both before and after the discovery of oil, and found that inter-marriages have long existed. Noting the social and cultural bonds and the sense of solidarity prevalent among the people of the GCC, Christie (1987) stated that “perhaps among the important factors in the composition of the GCC, the people of the six nations recognise and understand their fraternity in the wider implications of Arab nationality.” (pp. 7-8). On the other hand, cross-state tribal affiliations and family ties in the context of the GCC and how they affect the GCC have not been discussed. Highlighting the importance and role of such connections helps to identify the social basis for integration among the GCC member states.

## **10.3 Cross-Border Ties and Affiliations among GCC Citizens:**

The ties that unite the GCC citizens have generally been addressed in the literature from a historical perspective. Another way of examining this issue is to look at the cross-territorial networks of social relations, such as these of the family and tribal affiliations, that exists among GCC citizens. To do so, the sample respondents were asked to specify the sorts of relationship they had with citizens of other GCC countries, including family ties, tribal affiliations, and friendship networks. Most of the sample did have cross-border relationships of one kind or another, as many 85.3% confirming the intuitive impression that there are strong social ties between the peoples of the Arabian Gulf. These social ties complement the similarities of language,



religion, and other aspects of culture which characterise the population of the GCC states.

Most of the historical literature has focused exclusively on the family/tribal relations that existed before the oil discovery in the Gulf states. In his discussion the historico-cultural origins of the GCC population and its ruling royal families, Saudi (1993) stressed two main points: first, that the GCC population is purely Arab, hailing from a number of tribes who either migrated from Yemen or from Najed in Saudi Arabia, and second, that the ruling royal families in the Gulf states stem from the same tribe(s) and are, to that effect, united by ties of clan.

Crucial to the social hierarchy of the Gulf states are two types of relationships: first, closer relationships such as 'family ties'; and second, the wider circle of 'tribal relations'. Of concern to us here is the strength and scope of these two types of relations among the GCC citizens across boundaries of the member states of the GCC. Each respondent was asked about two issues: the types of social relationship they had with citizens of other GCC states, and, complementing this, the number and type of visits he/she undertook to the other GCC states during the last year. With respect to the first, three types of relationships are examined, viz. family ties, clan/tribe bonds and affiliations, and friendships.

#### **A. Family Ties:**

While it is perhaps inevitable in a region which has changed from being a colonised traditional society to independent modernising states in a short time that social change should also occur, it cannot be emphasised too strongly that the fundamental social unit in Gulf society, much as is the case in the Arab society as a whole, remains the (extended) family. The importance of the 'family' in the context of the Arab countries has been widely discussed. In his discussion of the extended family in the Arab world, Dawisha (1990:287) stated that "[...] the extended family has traditionally been hierarchically structured with authority resting in the hands of the oldest member. Deference to, and respect for, family elders creates a far greater conformity within an



Arab family than is usually the case in the Western family, where intra-family relationships are less hierarchical”.

‘Family’ ties were found to be the second most numerous type of social relation between our sample and citizens of other GCC countries, ties of ‘friendship’ being quantitatively the most common. As Table (10.1) illustrates, 39.1% of the sample have family members or relatives in other GCC states. With as many as 255 cases, it was found that the core of the sample's ‘family’ ties is concentrated in Saudi Arabia, with the UAE coming second with 150 cases. A major factor in this uneven distribution is the comparatively larger sizes of both Saudi Arabia and UAE among the countries of the GCC.

By nationality, however, the results of the survey show an important distinction in the distribution of social relations. The Qatari sample has larger and more widespread family links with UAE than the other samples have with any one GCC country. This pronounced level of ‘family’ ties between Qatar and the UAE might be attributed to a combination of factors: besides the close geographical proximity of the two countries, the citizens of the two countries generally hail from what are the same tribes. Some 55% (107 responses) of the Qatari sample have family ties of one sort or another with UAE citizens ( $\chi^2$ :51.13, *df*: 4,  $\alpha$ : 0.000). Similarly, the Qatari sample has strong familial links with Bahrain

Table 10.1 Distribution of Social Relationships Across the GCC Territories:

Country	Type of Social Relationship							
	Family		Tribal		Friend		Total	
	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%
Bahrain	118	7.5	42	2.7	161	10.2	321	20.4
Kuwait	58	3.7	24	1.5	86	5.5	168	10.7
Oman	18	1.1	10	0.6	160	10.2	188	12
Qatar	46	3	18	1.1	79	5	143	9.1
Saudi Arabia	225	14.3	73	4.6	100	6.4	398	25.3
UAE	150	9.5	48	3.1	156	9.9	354	22.5
Total	615	39.1	215	13.7	742	47.2	1572	100

The Kuwaiti sample has somewhat different, distribution of ‘family’ relationships; the majority (67.5%) have ties with Saudi Arabian citizens ( $\chi^2$ : 41.34, *df*: 4,  $\alpha$ : 0.000). Much of the Kuwaiti population originated from Saudi Arabia,



emigrating from the Arabian peninsula especially after the oil boom. The majority (56.5%) of the Kuwaiti sample have 'over 5' 'family relatives' in Saudi Arabia. The Second Gulf war played an important role in widening and strengthening the network of Kuwaitis' 'family' ties with other GCC citizens, especially Saudi citizens (see also table 10.4). The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the mass exodus of Kuwaiti citizens (see below) from Kuwait to other GCC countries in search of a safe haven, increased, particularly through marriage, Kuwaiti 'family ties' with other GCC countries. It is reported (al-Balla' & al-Murshid (1993)) that as many as 500,000 Kuwaiti fled their country following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

**Table 10.2 The Sample's Network of social ties Across GCC Countries:**

Country	Nationality		
	Kuwaiti	Qatari	Other GCC
<b>Bahrain:</b>			
Family	29	83	6
Tribal Relatives	13	29	0
Freinds	87	61	13
$\chi^2$	<b>34.984</b>	<b>df:4</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math>: 0.000</b>
<b>Saudi Arabia:</b>			
Family	129	90	6
Tribal Relatives	30	38	5
Freinds	32	47	21
$\chi^2$	<b>41.343</b>	<b>df:4</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math>: 0.000</b>
<b>UAE:</b>			
Family	33	107	10
Tribal Relatives	9	34	5
Freinds	85	53	18
$\chi^2$	<b>51.134</b>	<b>df:4</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math>: 0.000</b>

### A.1 Geographical Spread of 'Family' Ties:

Examination of the survey data shows that most of the sample have family relations of one sort or another with other GCC member states. This can be attributed to two main factors: the common culture and the geographical proximity of the GCC countries. The common historico-cultural origins of the peoples of the Gulf has been at the root of the strong relations binding the societies of this part of the Arab world. Much of the literature affirms that the common history and culture of the GCC states has acted as an integrating force underpinning the emergence of the GCC, (see among others Christie, 1986; Shafiq, 1989). Geographical proximity between the member



states not only supported union among these states but was also reflected in the social ties among their societies.

The results of the survey bearing on cross-territorial family ties in the GCC show that a sizeable proportion of the sample have ‘family relatives’ in one or other of the GCC member states (Table 10.3). Saudi Arabia is the locus of most of the family ties that the sample has with other GCC countries; 29.9% of the total sample indicated that they have a ‘relative’ in this state. The second highest number of ‘family relatives’ was found to concentrated in the UAE; 24.3% of the total sample have a ‘relative’ in this country. Finally, Bahrain was the third most important GCC country in terms of clustering of cross-territorial family ties, with 19.8% of the total sample having family ties with this GCC state.

Table 10.3 Number of family Relations across the GCC States:

Country	No. of Family Relatives				
	1-2	3-5	Over 5	☆Total	
				Frq	%
Bahrain	144	32	52	228	19.8
Kuwait	83	24	24	131	11.4
Oman	55	11	14	80	7
Qatar	56	8	23	87	7.6
Saudi Arabia	125	37	182	344	29.9
UAE	136	47	96	279	24.3

☆Number of Relationships

Table (10.4): Distribution of Family Ties among the Sample By Nationality:

Country	Nationality		
	Kuwaiti	Qatari	Other GCC
☆Bahrain:			
1-2	59	80	5
3-5	13	12	2
Over	7	40	5
Saudi Arabia:			
1-2	60	53	12
3-5	17	20	0
Over 5	100	75	7
UAE:			
1-2	51	76	9
3-5	17	26	4
Over 5	19	69	8
☆Sig. Level:	χ²: 14.70	df:4	α: 0.005



## **B. Clan Relationships:**

Tribalism and tribal relations are a prominent cultural and demographic cleavage within the Arab Gulf states. The Gulf states have generally been characterised as 'sheikhdoms' signifying the role that tribes and tribal relations play within Gulf society and the part tribes play within the political systems of the region. Most of the major tribes such as al-Murrah, Ajman, Bani Hajar, Otabah, Bani Khalid, and Qahtan have either clans or sub-clans in other GCC states. Historical research has revealed the role tribe played in the emergence of the littoral Gulf states which were subsequently to become separate states.

Cross-state tribal relations give a measure of the extent to which members of the GCC are demographically homogeneous and of their cultural unity. Also important here is the extent to which such cross-border ties are considered significant to a sense of the unity of the Gulf. Most (61.7%) considered tribal relationships to be a positive and an integrating factor to the emergence of the GCC. These results affirm the important role tribal relations and tribal affiliations still exercise within the GCC societies despite the continuous efforts of GCC to modernise social structures and dissolve the 'old', traditional social hierarchies. Overall, tribal relations account for 13.7% of the total social relationships that exist among the sample. This is hardly surprising in view of what we know about the origins of the modern states that make up the GCC: the majority of GCC citizens, as has been discussed in chapter 6, trace their origins to one of a few tribes now spread out over more one GCC country. The statistical analysis revealed that tribal relations are concentrated on Saudi Arabia-18.4% of the total sample assert an affiliation with a Saudi tribe or clan of a Saudi tribe, a function, as has been noted, of its size and of the role of Saudi Arabia as the heartland of a number of the tribes.

In the case of the Qatari sample, family ties outnumber 'tribal' ties with other GCC countries. 51.4% (90 informants out of a total 175) of the total Qatari sample claimed family ties with Saudi Arabia, in contrast to 21.7% (38 informants out of a total of



175) of the sample who claimed a tribal affiliation with a Saudi tribe. Also, as many as 67.5% (129 informants out of a sample of 191) of the Kuwaiti sample reported 'family' ties with Saudi Arabia and 15.7% (30 informants out of a sample of 191) of the Kuwaiti sample assert 'tribal' relations with Saudi Arabia. Thus, 'family' relations, in the case of both the Qatari and the Kuwaiti sub-samples, is stronger than other relations such as tribal ties.

A number of factors could be put forward as plausible explanations for this phenomenon. As pointed out in chapter 6, though tribal relations and structures still continue to play an important role within modern Gulf society, this role is not as pervasive nor as effective as it was in the past owing to the radical process of modernisation on which the modern states of the GCC have embarked in recent years. In an anthropological study of marriage among the young Qataris in Doha, Qatar's capital, al-Maliki and Ismeal (1993) found that both extended family and tribal affiliations have less and less a role to play in deciding marriages. Marriage among this category of Qatari citizens is increasingly less influenced by considerations of tribal ties and/or family wishes where young Qataris are showing more and more independence in the choice of marriage partner. The decline in the role of cultural and traditional relations within modern Gulf society might thus go some way towards explaining the relatively weak level of tribal ties that the two samples in questions have with other GCC countries. On the other hand, the higher level of family ties that they have with other GCC countries might be due, in part, to the greater freedom of movement across borders that GCC citizens have enjoyed since the establishment of the GCC and, in part, to the reported increasing independence shown by young GCC citizens in matters of marriage.

### **C. Fellowship and Fraternity:**

Friendship as a sense of fraternity can exist at different levels, between individuals, groups, communities, nations. Common cultural (linguistic, etc.) factors coupled with geographical proximity, are generally at the root of the close relations that exist among the GCC citizens and the sense of fraternity and solidarity that exist



among the citizens of these states. The strong sense of fraternity and solidarity among the GCC citizens is generally perceived within Gulf society as an important 'push' factor in the emergence of GCC. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait reinforced this sense of fraternity and solidarity. Fleeing the Iraqi invasion army, Kuwait citizens found not only a safe haven in neighbouring GCC countries, but unanimous support for their cause. It is reported (see, among others, al-Balla' & al-Murshid (1993)) that more than 500,000 Kuwaiti citizens left Kuwait following the invasion of the Iraqi army and sought temporary refuge in GCC countries, with Saudi Arabia hosting the predominant majority of these refugees. According to al-Balla' & al-Murshid (1993), over 350,000 Kuwaiti refugees entered Saudi Arabia where they were provided with housing, financial assistance, health care, and schooling facilities for the entire period of the invasion. Other GCC countries provided similar help to Kuwaiti refugees. Besides mobilising their resources to accommodate and assist the large numbers of Kuwaiti refugees, the GCC states were unanimous in their condemnation of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In addition to denouncing the illegality of Iraqi claims on Kuwait and the invasion, supporting all international resolutions calling for the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of the Iraqi army, the GCC states were either instrumental in organising the coalition against Iraq or the first to join this coalition.

Friendship ties too frequently cross political boundaries. Indeed, such ties of are numerically the dominant type of social relation among our sample. In all 47.2% of the sample claimed to have friends in other GCC countries. In some cases these ties were particularly strong between certain countries. Thus, the Kuwaiti sample's 'friendships' was strongest with Bahrain, for which there are two plausible reasons. First, the historical social and economic relations between Kuwait and Bahrain have been stronger than between any other two GCC countries. Bahrain is widely perceived among Gulf citizens as a more open and therefore more liberal society where social contacts and relations (including friendship) are not as difficult to establish as in the rest of the GCC countries. In addition, Bahrain is geographically one of the nearest GCC countries to Kuwait, second only to Saudi Arabia which shares a border with Kuwait.



#### **10.4 Cross-border Mobility among GCC Citizens:**

A great deal of the research on Gulf society focuses on the tribal structures, tribal hierarchies and the nomadic patterns that characterise(d) the societies of the Arab Gulf states. Cottrell (1980) examined the spread of tribes across the Gulf states' boundaries. Before the oil boom, tribes frequently migrated from one region to another, in search of a better plot of grass and water sources. However, the mobility of the tribes changed after the discovery of oil and the economic boom that followed in the aftermath of its exploitation. According to Eickelman (1989:78) "The most telling sign of the changed political role of the tribes in the Arabian Peninsula is their increasing urbanisation and sedentarisation. By the 1970s, only around 10 percent of the Saudi population lived a nomadic lifestyle, as opposed to roughly 40 percent in the 1950s." Cole (1975: 146-63) "[t]he oil boom of the 1970s decreased that percentage even further. In the smaller states as well there have been sustained efforts, based on oil wealth, to settle tribesmen. Even without direct government efforts, the move from the desert to the city has been an inevitable by-product of the economic changes brought about by oil wealth. Also according to Gause III (1994:24), "Sedentarisation means that tribesmen are directly dependent economically on the state for their houses, probably for their jobs (if they take jobs), and for social services. Motivated by social and economic impetuses (e.g. search for jobs), and assisted by such changes as the introduction of modern transport, mobility of citizens across GCC states, especially after the creation of the GCC, increased even more substantially.

One of the more significant steps undertaken by the member states of the GCC was reaching an agreement on the necessity of allowing their nationals the freedom to move across GCC borders, free of all visa controls. However, this agreement did not go as far as ensuring the freedom of these nationals to move across GCC borders free of all passports controls. Most of this movement across GCC boundaries takes place by air - in which there has been a substantial build up in the number of flights connecting centres in the Gulf - and by road. Both are widely accessible and affordable. Car ownership is nearly universal in the Gulf states, while air travel is



relatively cheap; it costs as little as £100 to travel from, say, Muscat in the most southern GCC state to Kuwait city the most northerly of the GCC states.

The pattern of mobility in the Gulf was explored in the sample survey. This was investigated by computing the visits that each of the two samples had made to one or more GCC countries during the past year and the reasons for the visit(s).

The results of the survey of the Kuwaiti sample (figure 10.1), show that visits to other GCC states were unevenly distributed the majority being made to three countries, namely, (in descending order of importance) Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain. Overall, a quarter of the sample had made from one to two visits to another GCC country in the past year, while only small minority had made more than two visits, and that an even smaller minority (less than 4%) had made five or more than five visits to one or more of the GCC countries.

Examination of the survey data bearing on the Qatari sample' patterns of mobility across GCC-borders revealed a basically somewhat similar pattern. As was the case with the Kuwaiti sample, the results of the survey showed that the movement of the Qatari students were not distributed equally among the GCC member states. The large majority of these visits were made to the three GCC countries already noted for the Kuwaiti sample, the only difference being that the UAE, rather than Saudi Arabia, was found to have been the most visited GCC country for the Qatari sample. Slightly more Qataris than Kuwaitis were found to have made one or two visits to a GCC country (cf. percentages provided in Table 10.5), but, as in the case of the Kuwaiti sample, only a small minority of the Qatari sample had made more than two visits to a GCC country.

Several explanations can be advanced as to why Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain are the most visited GCC countries by both samples. Saudi Arabia was found previously (cf. Table 10.1) to be the country with the largest concentration of cross-territorial 'family' and 'tribal' ties within the GCC. In regard to the UAE, there are at least two reasons as to why it is also one of the most visited GCC countries by both samples. In addition to having a high concentration of cross-territorial 'family' and

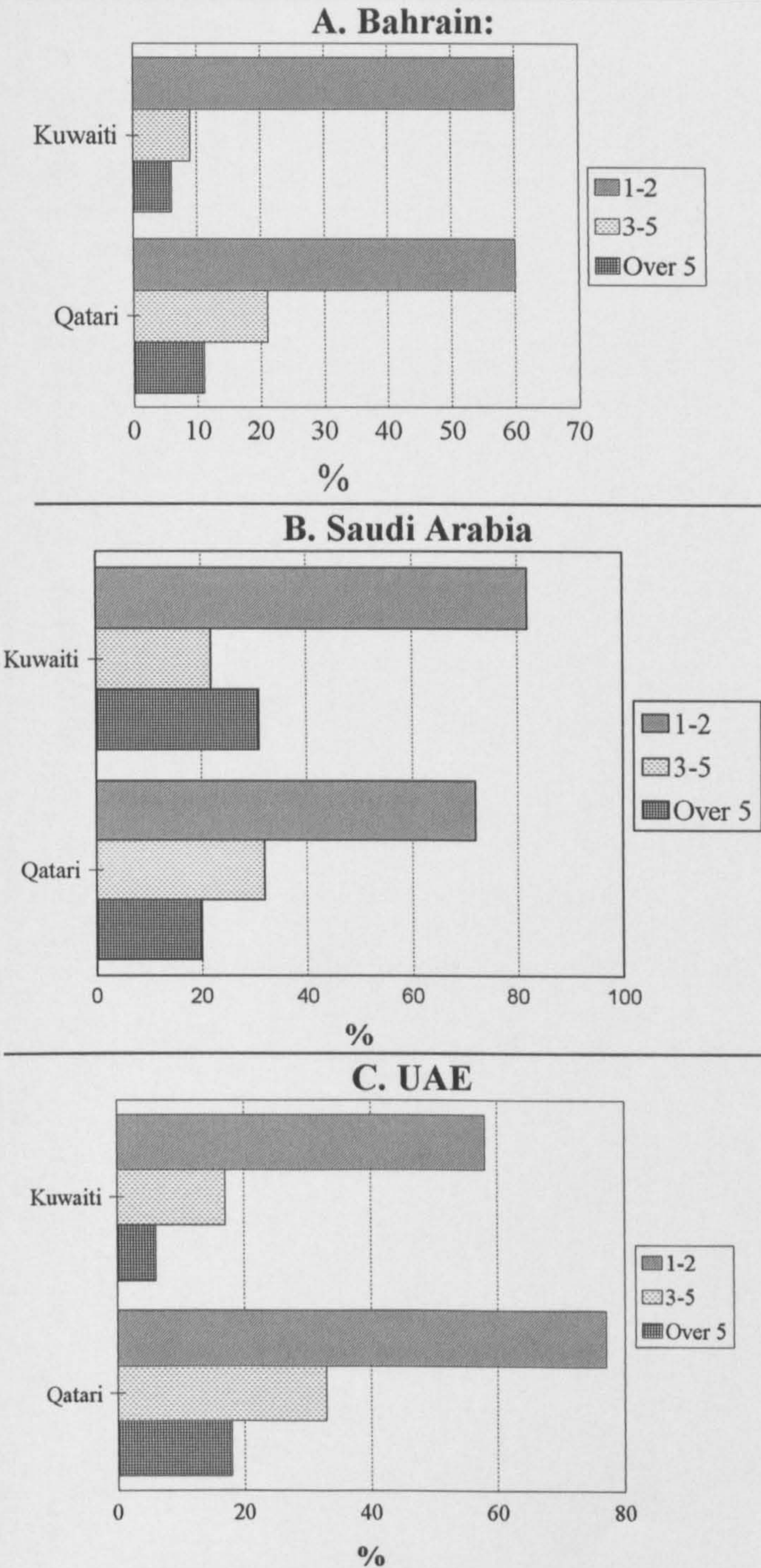


'tribal' ties within the GCC (see Table 10.1), the UAE is one of the biggest economic centres and major tourist points in the Gulf region.

Table 10.5 Mobility of Samples Across GCC Territories by Percentage:

No. of Visits	Nationality	
	Kuwaiti	Qatari
1-2	23.9	28
3-5	7	10.6
Over 5	3.3	3.9

Figure 10.1 Number of Visits By Sample's Nationality





Mobility Across GCC Territories: Motivations & Reasons

The reasons for cross-border movement varied, though most trips could be grouped into one or more of 5 main reasons:

1. Social, especially visiting relatives or friends.
2. Educational reasons (e.g. to attend a summer course, field trip).
3. Business.
4. Tourism.
5. Other (e.g., Umrah (pilgrimage)... etc.).

Of the reasons (underlying the two sample's mobility across GCC territories), visiting friends and relations reflecting the number of such ties that exist cross-nationally. Tourism was an equally significant reason for mobility across GCC territories. Since the GCC countries are, in general, traditional societies, most the GCC citizens prefer to spend their vacations in one of the GCC countries, rather than head for a foreign destination. Furthermore, through the organisation of major international sporting tournaments and/or major cultural festivals, some of the GCC countries are increasingly developing into major touristic destinations. The Doha Open in tennis, hosted by Qatar, the Dubai Open tennis tournament, the One-Month-Shopping festival held annually in Dubai, the annual Janadriyyah cultural festival in Saudi Arabia, and the annual book fair in Kuwait City, are among major events that are proving hugely popular with the GCC citizens. According to the Kuwaiti daily, *al-Anba'* (14/4/1998, p. 9), the majority of visitors to this year's annual One-Month-Shopping festival in Dubai were from the Arabian Gulf states.

Table 10.6 The sample's types of Visits to GCC Countries:

Country	Type of Visit											
	Relatives		Friends		Business		Tourism		Other		Total	
	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%
Bahrain	69	5.2	75	5.7	12	0.9	93	7.1	18	1.3	267	20.2
Kuwait	22	1.7	15	1.1	1	0.07	6	0.5	12	0.9	56	4.2
Oman	11	0.9	13	1	3	0.2	19	1.4	6	0.5	52	4
Qatar	18	1.3	15	1.1	2	0.1	15	1.1	12	0.9	62	4.7
Saudi Arabia	175	13.3	79	6	16	1.2	108	8.2	69	5.2	447	33.9
UAE	96	7.3	83	6.3	28	2.1	137	10.4	22	1.7	366	27.8
Other Countries	6	0.5	7	0.5	0	0	50	3.7	6	0.5	69	5.2
Total	397	30.1	287	21.8	62	4.7	428	32.4	145	11	1319	100

Total number of visits.



### **10.5 Identity and Perceptions of Identity among GCC Citizens:**

Most accounts of political identity suggest that for the individual these co-exist along several dimensions, and that in politico-territorial terms, they function at different spatial scales, local, state, and possibly at the supra-state (regional) level. Of the latter, several major factors have stimulated and reinforced the perception of a common distinctive 'Gulf identity' amongst the peoples of the GCC countries. One is their shared ethnicity where; as noted earlier, most of the GCC population can trace its origins to one of a few tribes now spread all over the Arabian Gulf. The other is the strong affinities in religious orthodoxy, systems of governance and societal hierarchies and structures; all the GCC countries are principally 'Sunni' states, ruled by traditional monarchies and with societies largely and dominated by tribal loyalties, and relations. Both of these factors emphasise common and distinctive affinities and affirm a common cultural and societal identity in the Gulf region. Thus, besides negative factors (i.e. external threats, regional unsuitability and conflicts, etc.) there are several positive integrating factors that 'unite' the states of the Arab peninsular and benefit integrationist policies and developments on the part of these states.

Politico-territorial identities are significant in underwriting the legitimacy and authority of political organisation. Here we focus on questions of identity, and their perception among Gulf citizens, exploring such issues as the multiple loyalties of citizens to their local area, tribal group, extended family unit, country, regional grouping and to such wider notions as the Arab nation.

#### **Politico- Territorial Identities:**

Scruton (1982: 213) characterised the concept of national identity as involving "a growing sense among people that they belong naturally together, that they share common interests, a common destiny. The search for an 'identity' in this sense is a major political motive." National identity is linked to individual loyalty to a cultural group defined within a certain territory, or group. Several scholars have



examined the issue of identity in the context of the Gulf region. In his study of the question of 'Arab identity' in the Gulf region from historical perspectives, Morony (1988) identified "Arab identity" in terms of such issues as historical changes and developments, the make up of the society, Bedouin life, and Arabic language, while Salamah (1982) recognised four types of identities in the context of the Arab world, religious, regional, local (e.g., GCC alliance), and group identities (e.g. 'camps' within the Arab League).

To examine the question of identity in the context of the GCC, the survey questionnaire looked at the order of importance attached by citizens to their:

- ❖ Local Area;
- ❖ Tribal Group;
- ❖ Extended Family (that is, family spread across one or more Gulf states);
- ❖ State;
- ❖ Supra- state regional organisation (the GCC countries);
- ❖ Arab Nation;
- ❖ Other Identities such as (Islam, Middle East).

The most prominent identities tend to be familial or where they are more overtly territorial, to the state or local area. Over 70% indicated 'family' was important or very important to their identity (Table 10.7), while 42.5% ranked the 'country' (of origin) as of most importance to their identity (27.8% ranked it "very important" 14.7% ranked it as 'important')). Finally, nearly 40% of the sample specified 'the local area' as a most important element in their identity while some 33% saw 'the tribal group' unit as of importance to their identity. This evidence affirms the notion that ethnic affiliations are not only a common phenomenon of Gulf society but that they in fact lay at the very heart of societal relations and organisation in the GCC countries.

In contrast only some 10% of the sample ranked the category specified in the survey as 'the GCC countries' as of importance to their identity. Significantly, nearly 60% claimed they 'didn't know' whether the GCC as a geopolitical unit was



important in self-identity terms. On the one hand, this reflects the importance of the state - only 10% didn't know whether the state was important to them. Equally, it may reflect the perception recorded elsewhere in this study that as a politico- territorial identity the GCC has been largely ineffective in representing the regional dimension.

Loyalty to and identifications with such notions as 'Arab Nation' were almost absent among the sample. As little as 3.6% of the total sample ranked such cultural construct as the 'Arab nation' as of some importance to their identities and affiliations. It is not difficult to understand why this is the case. Both the failure of Pan-Arabism as a uniting ideology among the Arab peoples and the more recent collapse of a sense of Arab unity and solidarity as a result of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait are important factors in this regard. Given that half of the sample are Kuwaiti citizens and that certain Arab countries either supported the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait or remained neutral vis-à-vis the conflict, it is perhaps not surprising that such 'notions of a larger Arab identity' have little support among the sample.

Table 10.7 Citizen Identities (Percentage):

Identity to:	Importance Level				
	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Don't Know
Local area	14.1	24.2	30.5	16.4	13.1
Tribal Group	5.8	27.1	28	19.7	17.5
Extended Family	45.4	25.1	13.1	9.3	5.8
State	27.8	14.7	16.8	26.6	10.2
Supra- state regional organisation (the GCC countries)	3.4	6.6	8.3	20.2	59.2
Arab Nation	3.4	2	2.7	6.3	80.3
Other Identity	1.7	0.5	0.3	0.2	11.5

Note: Missing values account for difference between 100% and row total.

Kinship as an important element of identity:

Identification with 'the extended family' evidently far outweighs the association with any other local, regional or national identities. Both for the Kuwaiti sample and the total Qatari sample a plurality saw the 'extended family' as “very important” to their identity ( $\chi^2$ : 16.336,  $df$ : 8,  $\alpha$ : 0.0378) (Table (10.8)). On the other hand, 8.1% of the total Kuwaiti sample viewed the 'local area' as “very important”, an attitude



mirrored by the Qatari sample, while 4.4% of the total Kuwaiti saw the 'tribal group' identity as 'very important'.

Table 10.8 Chi-Square for Perceptions of Gulf Identity, by Nationality:

Type of Identity	Nationality		
	Kuwaiti	Qatari	Other GCC
<b>Local Area:</b>			
Very Important	22	54	7
Important	54	68	21
Less Important	85	81	14
Not Important	60	35	2
Don't Know	49	27	1
<b>Tribal Group:</b>			
Very Important	12	20	2
Important	68	82	10
Less Important	63	87	15
Not Important	63	43	10
Don't Know	64	31	8
<b>Your Extended Family:</b>			
Very Important	113	125	30
Important	78	65	5
Less Important	35	36	6
Not Important	26	29	0
Don't Know	17	13	4
<b>Levels of Sign.:</b>			
Local Area:	$\chi^2$ : 47.159	df: 8	$\alpha$ : 0.0000
Tribal Group:	$\chi^2$ : 23.479	df: 8	$\alpha$ : 0.0028
Your Extended Family:	$\chi^2$ : 16.336	df: 8	$\alpha$ : 0.0378

Importance of 'Country' and Broader Geo-cultural Units in Gulf Identity:

Territorial identities focus mainly on the state and the 'local area'. Though, there are variations in the way Gulf citizens express their national and supra-national loyalties, national identities are markedly stronger than those the Gulf region generally. While more than half of the Kuwaiti sample (56%) tie their identity primarily with the 'state', only a little more than a third of the Qatari sample (35%) displayed a similar pattern of identification and loyalty. Given the recent history of Kuwait and the failure of the GCC and other Arab nations to counter the Iraqi invasion (without appeal to help from outside powers), the Kuwaitis' sense of loyalty is hardly surprising and is interpretable as a masked criticism and rejection of such grand but ineffective slogans as 'Arab nationhood' and 'Gulf identity.' Even so, more than half of the Qataris and more than a third of the Kuwaitis have indicated that the 'state' is not an important component of their identity. Arguably, either sub-national or supra-national identities are likely to fill the 'vacuum' for this type of respondent.



Table 10.9 Chi- Square for Sample's perceptions of Identity by Nationality:

Type of Identity	Nationality			Total
	Kuwaiti	Qatari	Other GCC	
<u>State:</u>				
Very Important	108	53	3	164
Important	44	39	4	87
Less Important	46	46	7	99
Not Important	54	88	15	157
Don't Know	18	30	12	60
<u>GCC Countries:</u>				
Very Important	9	10	1	20
Important	23	12	4	39
Less Important	28	18	3	49
Not Important	60	46	13	119
Don't Know	150	176	23	349
<u>Sign. Levels of:</u> <i>Your Country:</i>	$\chi^2$ : 53.938	df: 8	$\alpha$ : 0.000	

10.6 Overview:

Earlier chapters in this thesis have been concerned with the factors leading to the creation of an alliance in the shape of the GCC in an effort to establish greater political and economic cooperation between the member states. Fear of regional conflicts (e.g., the Iran/Iraq war, the Arabo-Israeli conflict) threatening the stability of these states from hostile neighbouring countries were critical to the creation of the GCC. However, it is not only 'negative' factors that 'unite' the Arabian peninsula states. The discussion in this chapter suggests that the states of the Arabian peninsula are also united by positive, integrating factors linked to their cultural and social solidarity. This unity and solidarity is underpinned by a broad network of social and cultural relations and grounded in strong linguistic, religious, and ethnic affinities as well as conspicuous similarities in political, cultural and societal institutions.

The chapter did not seek to examine the precise role that the broad network of family, tribal, and other ties and relations have played in the emergence of the GCC. Rather, it sought to evaluate the scope and nature of these relations and ties with a view to understanding what lies at the heart of a widely acknowledged cultural unity and social solidarity within the region and what accounts for perceptions of a common distinctive identity among the GCC citizens. Analysis of the survey reveals results



bearing on the intricate network of cross-cutting and cross-border ties operating across the region's state boundaries.

While these 'sources of solidarity' themselves cannot be the major reasons for the emergence of the GCC, no doubt they have acted as incentives to its establishment. Yet, caution needs to be applied here in linking societal factors to political outcomes. Like international politics, regional politics are complex and inter state relationships often reduce to considerations of potential self-interest. As Matthews (1993) argues, “[a]ction by states in the international arena may be seen as the resultant of the balance of incentives and disincentives for taking it. Not only does it require the existence of positive incentives for action to take place but also a weakness of disincentives or restraining influences.” (p. 44).



## ***Chapter Eleven:***

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### **GCC Inception, Function and Political Machinery: Citizen Perceptions**

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#### **11.1 Introduction:**

**W**hile previous chapters have established that on the one hand the citizen - using the student sample as surrogate - is relatively knowledgeable about the GCC, what is important to establish is how perceptions both of the creation of the GCC and its functioning are structured. What kinds of factors are considered as having been important to the founding of the GCC? How effective has it been as a supra-national organisation? What are the major problems hindering the greater effectiveness of the organisation? To the extent that such questions have been posed to the elite sample, this chapter counterpoises the views of the citizen.

#### **11.2 Factors Underlying the Formation of the GCC:**

Much of the existing literature addressing the broad question of what underlies the establishment of the GCC emphasises the crucial role of two basic factors- the external threats to the political stability and military security of the GCC member states particularly following the Iranian revolution and the outbreak of the Iraq/Iran war, and the need to build strong political, institutional, cultural and economic commonalities between the several 'small' nations which share borders and occupy the Gulf region certain problems in common. Both kinds of factors will be examined here with a view to determining which consideration or set of considerations is perceived by citizens as having been crucial to the emergence of the GCC.



### A. External Factors:

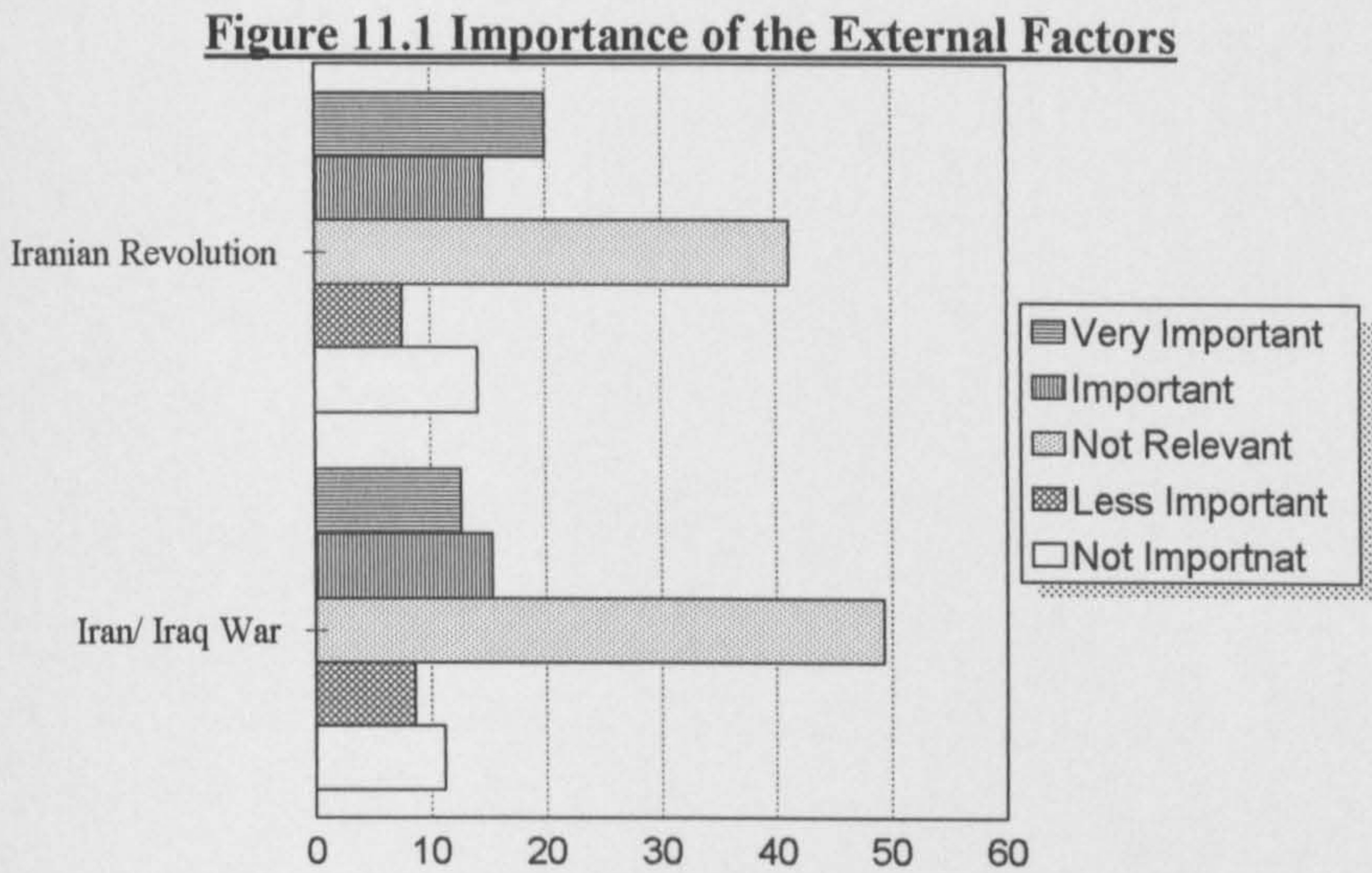
The two types of external factor with which are of concern here are those which have commonly been assumed to be the most important in the formation of the GCC, viz. the eruption of the Iranian revolution and the outbreak of the Iran/Iraq war.

The Iranian revolution in 1979 posed a major threat to both the political stability and military security of the various Gulf states. There was much apprehension among the Arab Gulf regimes that the Iranian revolution might spill over to themselves, stimulating acts of insurgency and destabilisation by local minority Shi'ite populations. Salame (1988) argued that revolutionary Iran posed the characteristic threat of an expansionist force in the Gulf region. He also asserts that even during the period of the Shah, Iran pursued an expansionist policy that targeted Iraq and the Gulf states, but that since the outbreak of the revolution Iran has become more conspicuously aggressive in its attitudes towards the Gulf states. El-Rayyes (1988) also affirmed the negative impact of the Iranian revolution on the GCC member states, asserting that the Iran revolution had represented a considerable challenge to the GCC countries, especially those with a sizeable Shi'ite population. Iran, it was argued, had provoked turmoil within some of the smaller GCC member states, such as Bahrain, by precipitating a *coup* in the latter part of 1981. Addressing the effects the Iranian revolution has had on its neighbouring Gulf states and the factors which brought the GCC into existence, Anthony (1988) argued that the main reason behind Iran's aggressive policy towards the Gulf states was a determined effort to export the revolution to its neighbouring Gulf states. Much of the available literature, then, highlights the widespread fear felt by the Gulf political establishment that the revolutionary zeal of Iranian radicalism could inspire or incite a Shi'ite destabilisation of the political situation in the Gulf states. With a view to verifying these arguments, we will assess how citizens' perceive the importance of these threats and their impact on the formation of the GCC.

The distribution of attitudinal patterns across the two groups - citizens and the political elite - illustrates the importance of this factor to the creation of the GCC. The



results can usefully be compared alongside these of al-'Esa & al-Manofi's (1985) study with a view to gauging the shift in attitudinal and perception patterns before and after 1990. Surprisingly, the results of the citizen survey show that the Iranian revolution was not perceived as a critical factor in the formation of the GCC. Over 40% of the total sample believed that the Iranian revolution was not one of the most important factors underlying the establishment of the GCC, while only 20% of the total sample believed otherwise (Figure 11.1). In contrast, among the GCC elite, the Iranian revolution was perceived as the most significant factor behind the establishment of the GCC. In part the reason why there is such a difference between the two samples arises from the censorship imposed on the GCC media on matters connected with the Iranian Revolution. Further, where the export of the Revolution was a potentially destabilising force, the elite were the more obviously threatened.



Source: Survey

These patterns were broadly replicated by nationality between the Kuwaiti and Qatari samples. Thus, only 23.3% of the total Kuwaiti sample regarded the Iranian revolution as the most important factor behind the creation of the GCC, a figure matched by the Qatari sample (18%). In contrast some 37% of the Kuwaiti sample perceived the 'Iran factor' as of no relevance to the formation of the GCC. As far as the Kuwaiti differences are concerned a plausible explanation might lie in the hostilities between their government and that of Iran in the early 1980s. The Qatari



sample's perceptions revealed a stronger rejection of the Iranian revolution as a relevant factor in the establishment of the GCC. Over half (51.4%) of the Qatari sample perceived it as 'not relevant' to the formation of the GCC (Table (11.1)).

As is clear from the attitudinal differences shown in Table (11.1), the importance of the Iranian revolution threat is perceived differently by Kuwaiti, Qatari, and Other GCC samples. In Kuwait the Iranian revolution was perceived as important, for which several reasons may be suggested. First is the geographical proximity of Iran, which not only created the need for the establishment GCC but also speeded it up. Ghabra (1996) explains the reasons which encouraged Kuwait to speed up the formation of the GCC. The former Secretary-General of the GCC argued that the decision to support Iraq (in its war with Iran) was a policy designed to weaken the revolutionary Iran. Since the outbreak of the Iranian revolution, Kuwait had been constantly living in the shadow of Iranian terrorist attacks, especially attempts at assassinating the emir. These threats which Kuwait faced from Iran in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution, were the more immediate precisely because of its geographical proximity. A further reason was the fear of a Shi'ite uprising in Kuwait as well as other GCC states.

Table 11.1 The GCC Reasons for Establishment By Nationality: (Frequency)

GCC Reason	Nationality			Total	%
	Kuwaiti	Qatari	Other GCC		
<b><u>Iranian Revolution:</u></b>					
Very Important	63	48	7	118	20.5
Important	46	31	9	86	14.9
Less Important	23	18	4	45	7.8
Not Important	38	39	7	84	14.6
Not Relevant	100	125	18	243	42.2
<b>Total:</b>	270	261	45	576	100
<b><u>Iran/ Iraq War:</u></b>					
Very Important	41	28	6	75	13.1
Important	44	38	9	91	15.9
Less Important	24	25	2	51	8.9
Not Important	25	36	5	66	11.5
Not Relevant	134	135	22	291	50.7
<b>Total</b>	268	262	44	574	100

Yet, it is clear that the Iranian revolution was not the sole (or always the major) factor that influenced the creation of the GCC. Indeed, Kuwait and Bahrain were the only two GCC state members that were to be really affected by the Iranian

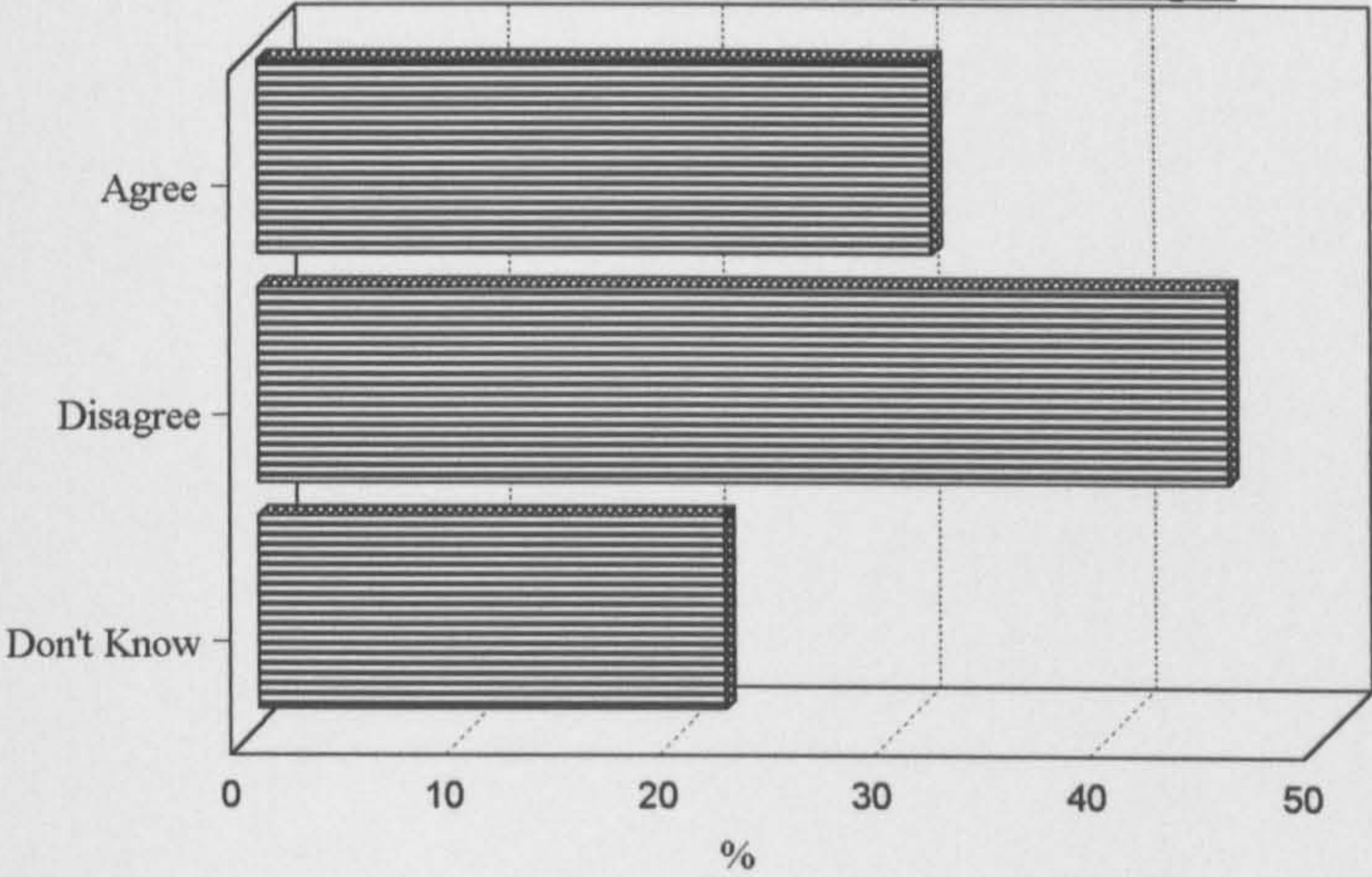


revolution. The greater 'distance' of Qatar and other GCC member states from the Iranian threat is reflected - in the case of Qatar - by the sample statistics. Overall, such a threat was greater in the years immediately after the Revolution, and had lessened somewhat by the 1990s.

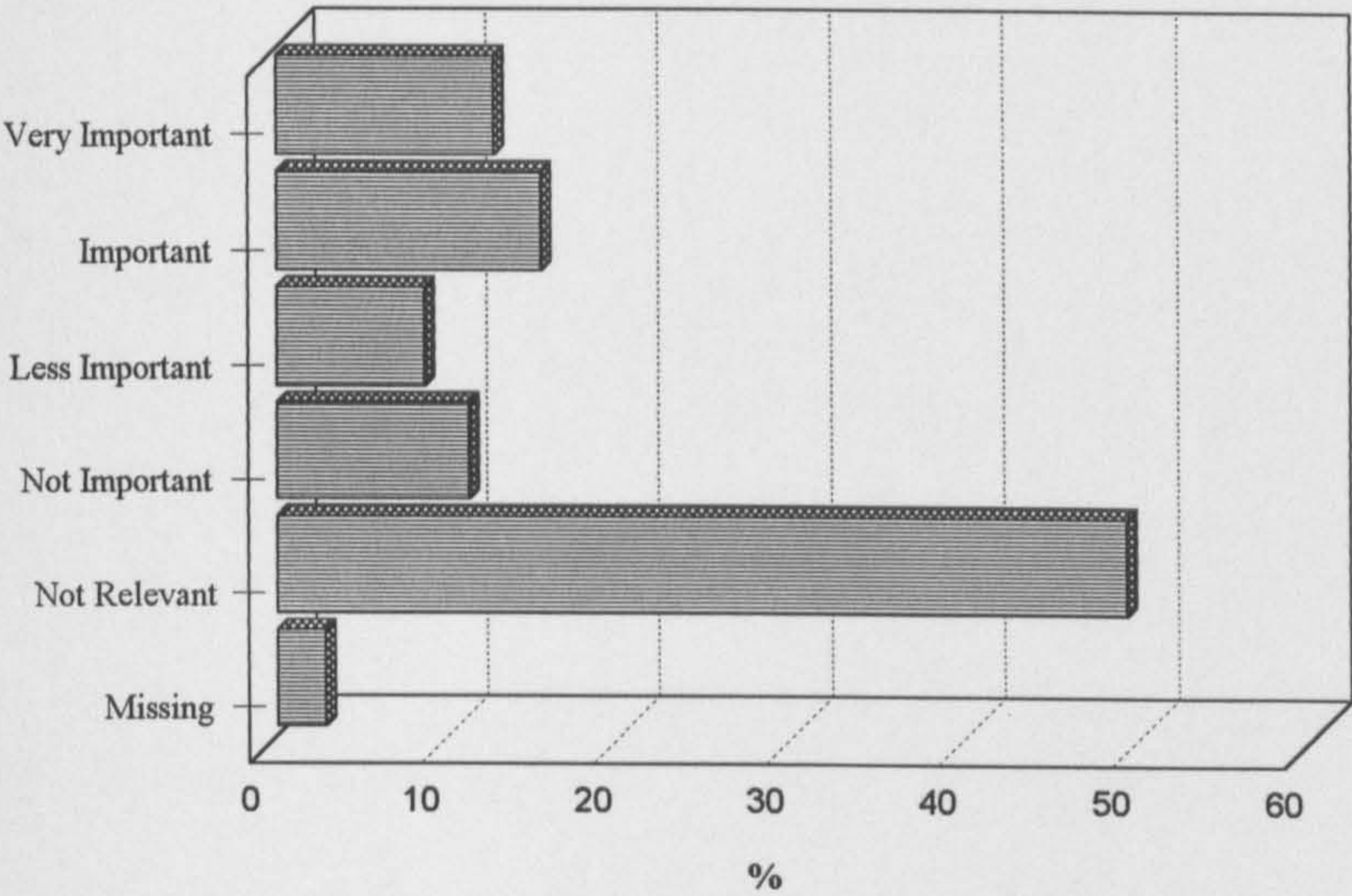
The outbreak of the Iran/Iraq war has also been seen widely as one of the external factors which led to the emergence of GCC. The possibility of the war spreading to other parts of the Gulf created an obvious threat, particularly/to the smaller GCC member states. Demographically and militarily, the size of Iran is far larger than any of the GCC member states. None of the GCC member states would have been able to counteract Iran on its own in the event of a war. Also, the Iranian revolutionary zeal and the fear of its potential spillover to minority Shi'ite Muslims within the Gulf state territories created pressures on the GCC governments to seek possible ways of averting the crisis. El-Rayyes (1988) argued that the outbreak of Iran/Iraq war signalled the imminent danger of Islamic Shi'ite insurgency and the expansion of Persian nationalism. Clearly, the Iran/Iraq war event undoubtedly drove the Gulf states to react (Braun, 1988). Squeezed by the two strong powers of Iran and Iraq, the Gulf states realised that, unless they united, they had no choice but to adopt a nonbelligerent position. Drysdale & Blake (1985) viewed the formation of the GCC as a regional response to a regional conflict. Yet, if these studies have emphasised the importance of the Iran/Iraq war, this is not supported necessarily by public opinion in the Gulf society, as measured in the survey of citizen attitudes. Nearly half of the total sample rejected it as one of the relevant factors underlying the formation of the GCC, a figure which was reported in both Kuwait and Qatar. These figures were broadly similar to those identified in an earlier study by al-'Esa & al-Manofi (1985). Figure (11.2) shows the distribution of attitudinal patterns among the al-'Esa & al-Manofi Kuwaiti sample with regard to whether the Iran/Iraq conflict had any impact on the emergence of the GCC.



**Figure 11.2 Distribution of the Iran/ Iraq Factor  
Before and After 1990 by Percentage:**



Source : Al-'Essa & Al-Manofi (1985)



Source: Survey

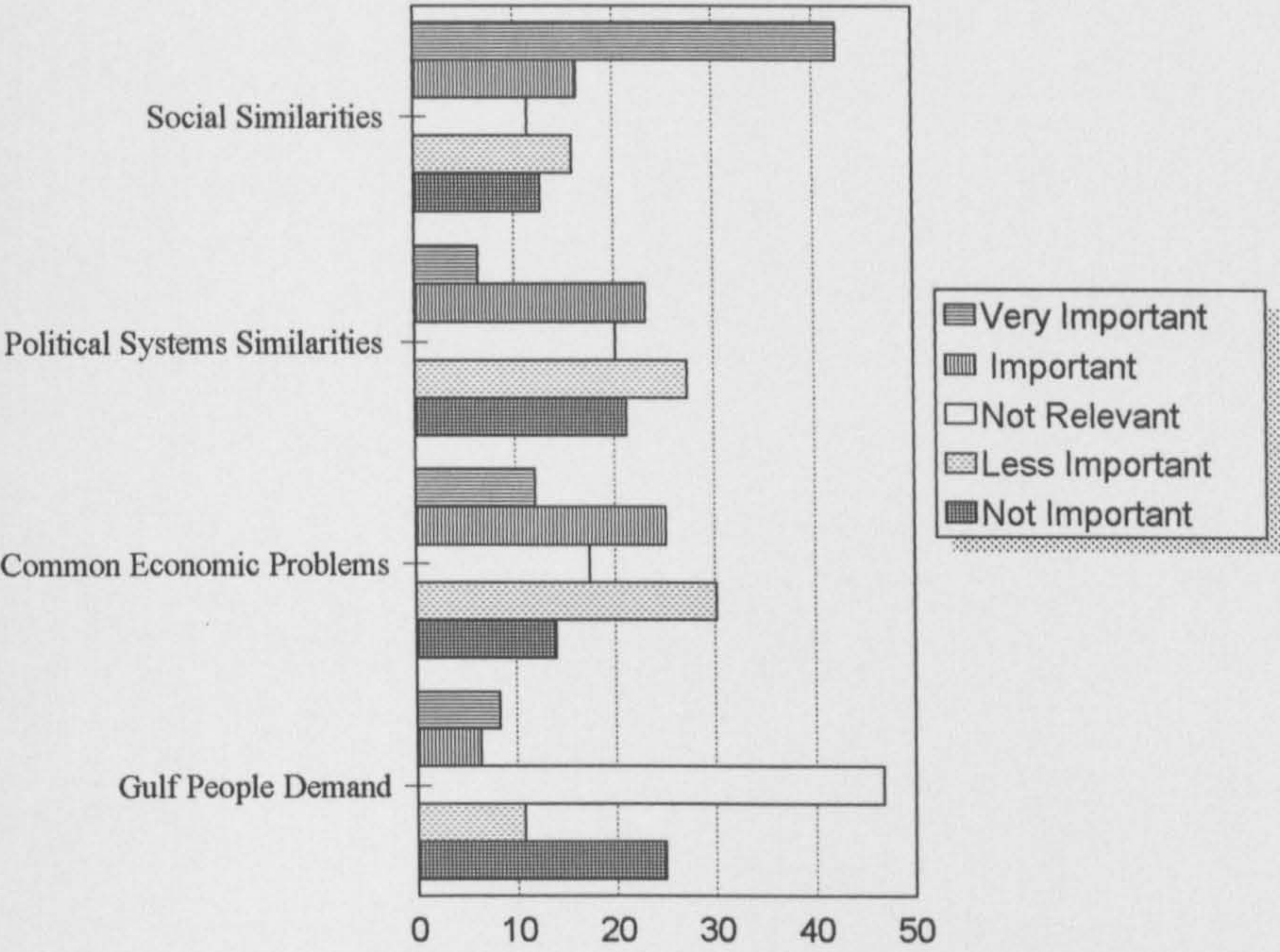
The sample’s decision to reject both the ‘Iran/Iraq war’ as well as the ‘Iranian revolution’ as two of the major external driving forces behind the formation of the GCC might reflect their preference to emphasise their societal and cultural affinities, rather than dwell on what they consider the less important, or more negative, external factors. Much of the literature and most of the GCC political elite surveyed here have insisted on the importance these two external conflicts.



**B. Internal Factors:**

Four factors are commonly cited as playing a crucial role in the creation of the GCC: the common social structures of the member states, the similarity of their political systems, their economic status, in particular, their dependency on oil, and, finally, the common aspiration of Gulf citizens to see the emergence of an integrated regional organisation. The importance of these, as drawn from the survey, is shown in Figure 11.3.

**Figure 11.3 GCC Reasons By Importance Level**  
**1. Internal Factors**



Source: Survey

As regard previously, the existence of common societal bonds among GCC member states have been the focus of attention by a number of scholars (Hay, 1959); Christie, 1986). In an historically - based study of the GCC, Christie (1986) differentiated between the GCC and supra-national organisation such as the EU in terms of the strong affinities existing among the member states of the GCC. He argued that while most alliances would have to accommodate for different languages, cultures, and political systems, the GCC does not face such obstacles. Highlighting another common social characteristic binding the GCC member states together, Bah'a



al-Deen (1989) argues that the strength of the GCC lies in the social and cultural affinities (customs, language, religion, .. etc.) found among the populations of the its member states.

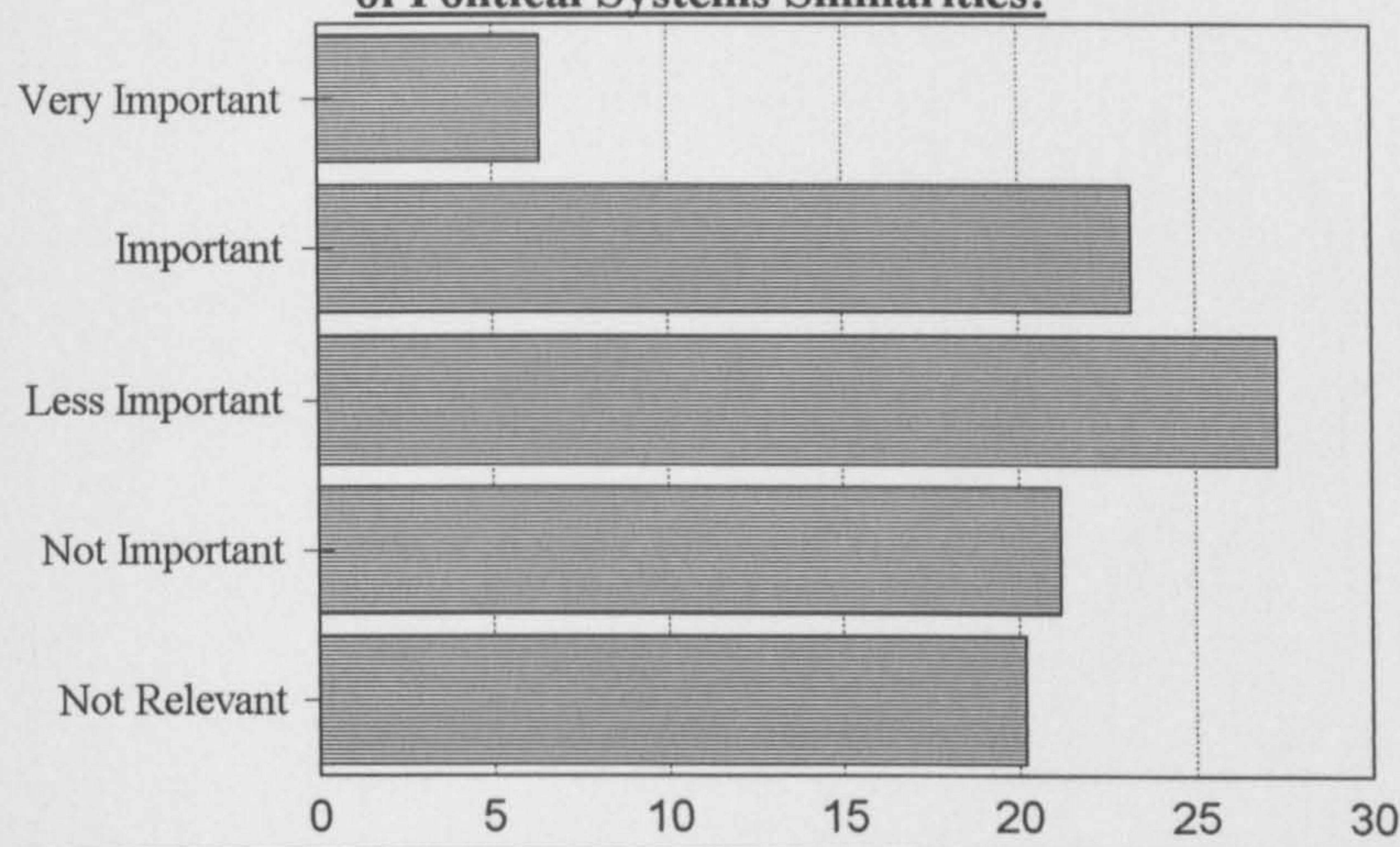
Al-Rumaihi (1975) emphasised the role of the tribal background of the Gulf societies arguing that “[t]he nationals of these states (GCC) came from tribal backgrounds (and often from the same tribal origins) which has contributed to their having similar social and family structures, legal systems, inter-personal relationships, values, housing arrangements, marital customs and art forms.” (see also Melikian (1988) on this point). The GCC Charter itself emphasises the importance of these social similarities and “of the ties of special relations, common characteristics and similar systems founded on the creed Islam which bind [member states] [and the] common destiny and the unity aim which link their people ....,” (GCC Charter, p.3). These sentiments were broadly supported by the findings of the survey; nearly 60% thought that the social similarities between the member states were either ‘very important’ or ‘important’ in the founding and operation of the GCC.

Similarities in the nature of their political systems characterise the member states, and these too have helped contribute to the formation of the GCC. Peterson (1988a) noted that the GCC states have evolved from tribal polities and that even the post-independence GCC states are in fact widely accepted as a continuation of the pre-modern state systems. The current regimes are largely traditional authorities governed by ruling families. With the exception of Kuwait, all of the GCC states rely on similar consultative public councils (*Majlis*) as a way of political representation and public participation in the (political life of the country).

Despite their prominence, these affinities and similarities in the political systems and type of governance were largely underplayed by the sample as significant factors in the creation of the GCC. While only 7% of the sample were of the view that ‘political systems similarities’ were a ‘very important’ factor in the founding of the GCC and another 23% thought these similarities were ‘important’ factor, more than 41% claimed that similarities of political systems were of no importance whatsoever to the emergence of the organisation of GCC.



**Figure 11.4 The Sample's Perceptions of Importance of Political Systems Similarities:**



Obviously, these views contrast with those of the elite. Citizen perceptions in this regard are not difficult to understand or rationalise. The concrete achievements of the GC in most fields of cooperation have so far been very modest indeed, betraying the large gap that obtains between the reality of the GCC and the rhetoric of the organisation's officials and leadership. Furthermore, the GCC member states have so far failed to capitalise on the similarities existing between their political systems so as to establish meaningful levels of political, cultural and economic cooperation and to eliminate such sources of tension and conflict as the long-standing problem of border disputes.

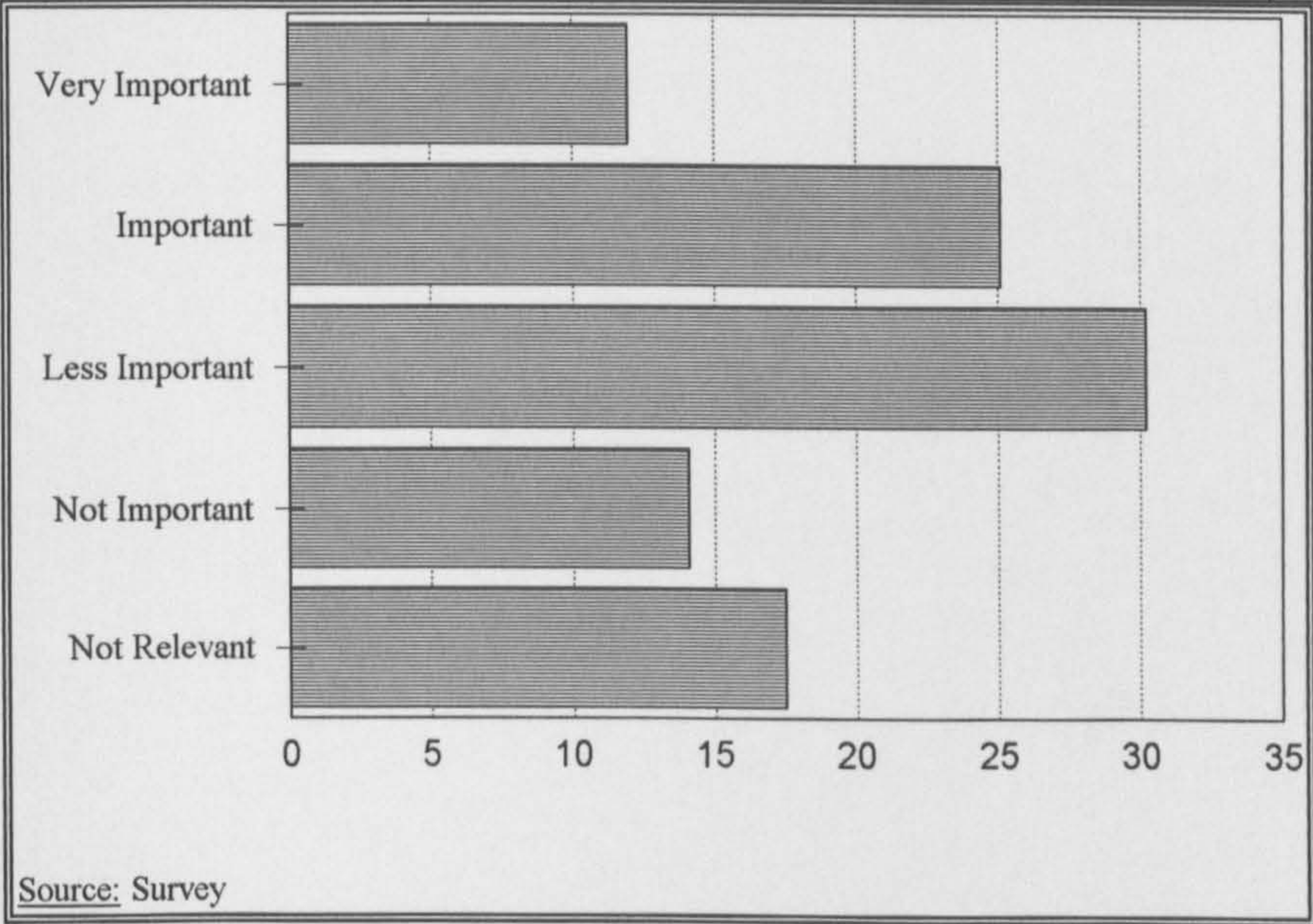
With the exception of Bahrain and Oman, the GCC member states are all oil rich countries and highly dependent on oil revenues and associated industries (e.g. petrochemicals). Many scholars have identified the common economic problem deriving from this heavy dependency on oil and oil revenues. In his examination of the consequences of fluctuation in oil prices on the economies of GCC countries during the 1970s and 1980s, Hunter (1986) argued that "[f]alling revenues have reduced the level of spending by Gulf governments, forcing cutbacks in development projects, reductions in the number and salaries of government employees and delays in payment to contractors" (p.593) and that "Declining revenues have had a significant impact on [the GCC states] budgets, spending patterns, financial assets, and economic indicators. In 1982, for the first time since the oil price revolution, Saudi Arabia ran a



budget deficit and has had one ever since” (pp. 596-97). Henderson (1987) also emphasised the impact of loss of oil revenues on the economies of these states, arguing that “[t]he recent collapse of oil prices has caused substantial conjecture among economists about the future of the oil industry and the effects of possible price scenarios on the Gulf produces [GCC]” (p.69). Al-Rumaihi (1983) and Obeid (1996) even argue that the common problem of dependency on oil and the loss of revenues as a result of decline in oil prices during the 1980s drove the Arabian Gulf states to set up the GCC as an economic alliance with a view to overcoming their economic difficulties through cooperation and coordination of policies in both the economic and other sectors.

These arguments are not necessarily reflected in the sample survey. Asked as to whether they believe common economic problems, the dependency on oil, had had a role in the formation of the GCC, the sample expressed somewhat divided opinions. Just over a third were of the view that common economic problems had played an important role though this was matched by a roughly similar proportion who considered it relatively unimportant.

**Figure 11.5 Number of Cases by the Factor of Common Economic Problem (Percentage)**



Nearly two-thirds of the sample seem to believe that heavy dependency on oil and consequent economic problems had no important role to play in the setting up of



the GCC. While the perceived unimportance of these common economic problems might be linked to the assumption among the majority of the sample that social and cultural similarities are primarily responsible for the emergence of the GCC, a more plausible explanation might have to do with the censorship imposed on any sensitive problems, including economic ones.

Finally, the aspiration of Gulf citizens for some form of political unity is also widely regarded as one of the factors that motivated the formation of the GCC. Christie (1986) recognised the importance of this factor in explaining the creation of the GCC, while Shafeeq (1989) alleged that the existence of the GCC is a result of the long-existing aspiration among the Gulf citizens for unity. As an argument it has been used by the GCC elite to justify the existence of the organisation. Thus, according to 'the former Secretary-General, the formation of the GCC represents the culmination of the long-standing desire of the Gulf people for a regional alliance pursuing political and economic integration' (Al-Riyadh newspaper, 12. Dec. 1981).

Paradoxically, as al-'Esa (1993) noted, "the GCC experiment was not based on any grassroots participation. The governments reserved the right to take political decisions and determine aspects of cooperation and alliance. The non-involvement of the citizens in the political process ... led [ultimately] to their disillusionment and diminished support for the organisation", (al-Siyasah, 21 Dec., 1993). The GCC organisation has no direct contacts with citizens, the elite having appropriated the decision-making process.

Not surprisingly, then, a substantial proportion of those replying to the questionnaire (46.8%) felt that the 'demands of the Gulf people' were 'not relevant' to the existence of the GCC, while a further 25% described it as 'not important' as such a factor. These responses represent another dimension to the disaffection held toward the organisation.

It should be noted at this point that the GCC has so far failed to meet the continuous demands of the citizens to broaden its political base and allow them a



wider and more direct participation in the politics of the region, where the status quo restricts the decision-making process to the political elite. These demands have been regularly voiced on the local media, and, particularly, in the pages of Kuwaiti newspapers. The fact that these demands persist is a clear indication that the GCC has so far made no major efforts to meet citizen demands. In an extensive series of interviews with the educated elite, the Kuwaiti newspaper *al-Qabase* reported a citizen as declaring: “[t]he GCC should aim at realising the citizens' hopes and fulfilling their aspirations by allowing them to participate in the decision-making process much as in Kuwaiti” (4. Nov. 1985). Kuwait is presently the only state among the GCC members that has a fully elected house of parliament. Elections are held every 4 years to choose members of the Kuwaiti Parliament. The failure of the GCC to discuss those issues of direct importance to the citizen has inevitably exacerbated their dissatisfaction with the organisation and increased the demand for a radical rethink of the objectives of it.

The 1990 crisis brought to the fore the necessity for more solidarity within the GCC (Quassim, 1993). Arguably, such solidarity will only materialise if the GCC is prepared to grant its citizens a more active role, or at least greater transparency in the decision-making process. The demands by the GCC citizens for a broadening of the GCC's activities and the widespread dissatisfaction with the GCC's response to these demands represents a brake on the extent to which the GCC has been able to establish itself in the Gulf as a regional organisation.

### **Overview:**

Of all the factors generally cited as motivating the creation of the GCC the one factor perceived as the most significant is that linked to the social similarities existing among the Gulf societies. There is a strong awareness of these similarities among citizens and real importance is attached to them in binding the Gulf societies together. Yet, precisely because of this importance, there is a sense of dissatisfaction with the GCC organisation. In other words, the identification of social similarities as a critical



factor in the existence of the GCC has become a reaction against the non-democratic nature of the GCC machinery and the political elite's total control over this and other institutions. Most of the GCC states exclude their citizens from participation in the process of decision-making. Apparently, this exclusion has negatively affected the sample's attitudes. These attitudes also signal the common sentiment among the citizens that, in so far as its mode of operation is concerned, the GCC remains similar to the politics of the governments of its member states, and that its governing style is essentially an endorsement of the political *status quo*. From the citizen's perspective, the GCC was established for certain purposes but has failed to fulfil its role. The formation of the GCC may have met a real need and might even have anticipated popular aspiration, but no popular votes were cast for its establishment and no tests of public opinion have been conducted in order to assess the citizens' attitudes towards the institution (Christie, 1987).

The absence of any democratic basis has been frequently commented on both in the press and by academics. Al-Kuwari (1992) argued: "[t]he [...] political frameworks [...] do not allow for my voice and those of the likes of me to be heard so as to influence crucial policy decisions." Commenting on how a proposal outlining a strategy for development and integration, submitted to the GCC Secretariat-General in 1984, was never brought to the attention to either the Supreme or Ministerial Council, he pointed out that the proposal was objected to and ultimately rejected because it called for "the instituting of a federal structure, capable of allowing the people of the region a more active and effective political role." Such a lack of participation has affected the attitudes of the sample respondents towards the GCC to a considerable degree. An integration process seeking to achieve supra-state regionalism is the more likely to realise its potential when the alliance is grounded in the demands of civil society. Such an alliance may achieve a higher level of 'integration', where both the political elite and the citizens share in the process of decision-making.



### **11.3. Evaluation of the GCC Political Machinery:**

This section investigates the citizen perceptions of the GCC functions, then examines the problems facing the GCC and, finally, addresses the issues of GCC membership, the type of voting practices within the GCC, and the function and role of the Commission for Settlement of Disputes within the organisation.

#### **I. Citizens' Perceptions & GCC Function:**

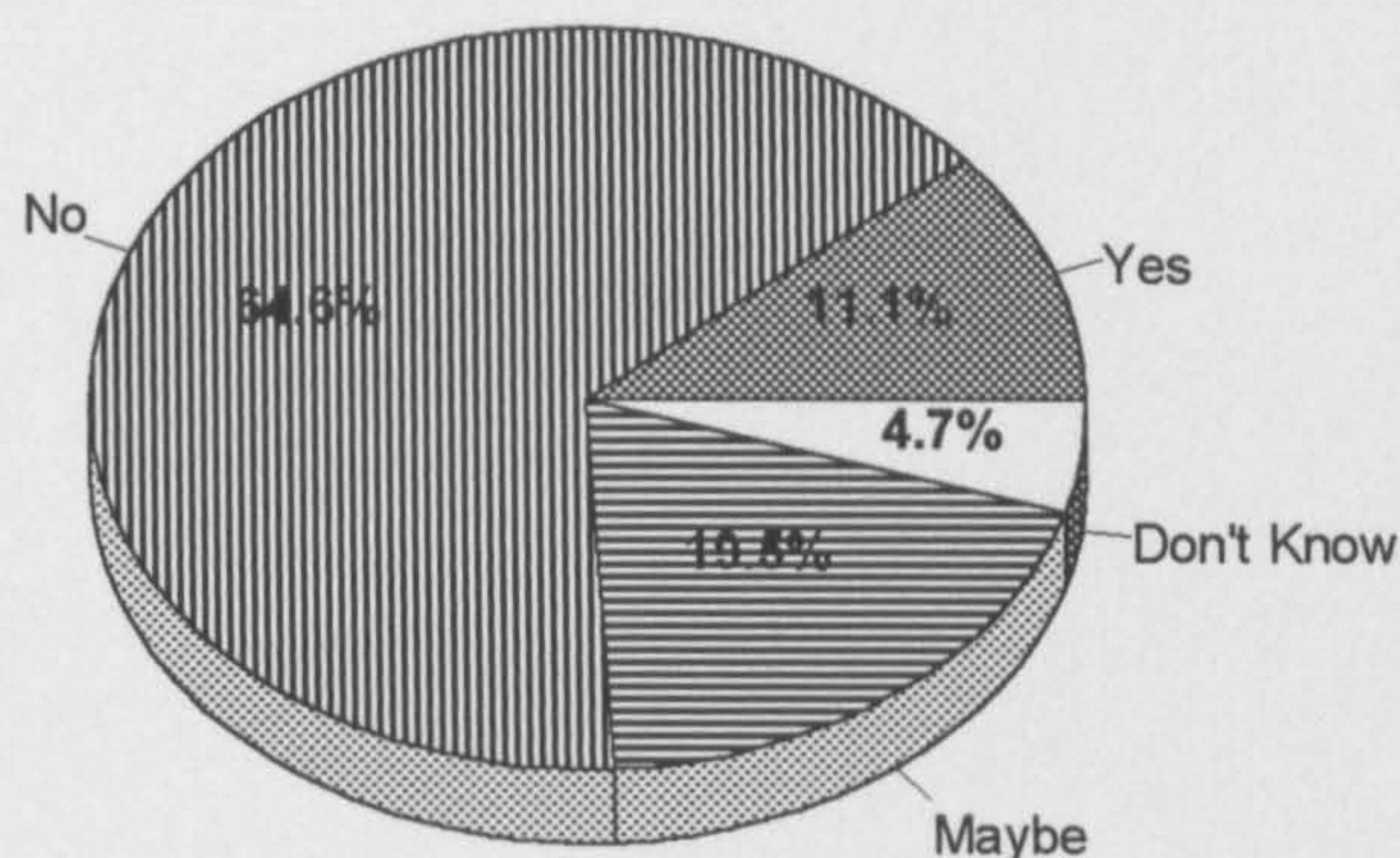
Most of the literature describes the GCC as a security-motivated organisation. Bishara, an Ex-GCC Secretary-General, highlighted the nature of the GCC in an interview with al-Siyasah newspaper (Nov. 24, 1993). He argued that the GCC has concentrated on, firstly, pursuing certain security objectives and enforcing defence arrangements, and, secondly, establishing and maintaining a 'desert shield'. Shuriedeh (1995) emphasised the importance that the leaders of the GCC attach to the defence function of the organisation, arguing that they were most anxious about the security of their countries. There are several dimensions to such security, where as Nakhlah (1986) noted the GCC provides for three types of multilateral security cooperation: domestic (against any internal coup d'état or local insurgency), regional, and international.

In view of the great importance the elite gives to a common defence policy as a GCC function, it is important to evaluate whether this is matched by citizen perceptions. The latter does not necessarily follow: it is plausible that citizens give greater priority to other objectives of the GCC as defined by the Charter.

Indeed, nearly two-thirds (64%) rejected the notion that the function of the GCC should be limited to common defence policy and arrangements, suggesting that the interests of the Gulf states would be better met by an alliance that pursues multi-sectoral cooperation rather than being limited to questions of defence. This is not to deny that defence is not a key aspect; rather, that the aspirations citizens have of the GCC extend beyond security concerns.



**Figure 11.6 Attitudes toward Limiting the GCC Function to Common Defence Policy and Arrangements**



The sample were asked about the type of functions they would like to see the GCC fulfil. In their responses, they ranked what they perceived as the priority functions of the GCC i.e.:

- Issues related to citizenship such as the use of one passport within the GCC, free movement among the member states, equal citizenship among the nationals of the various GCC countries.
- Social issues.
- Political issues (including defence)
- Economic issues.
- Immigration issues.
- a Common Market.

Such agenda differ significantly from that of the elite. Citizenship and social issues are viewed as more significant than those of defence and security. Indeed, some of the dissatisfaction with the GCC arose from the feeling that the organisation has concentrated too much on questions of security.

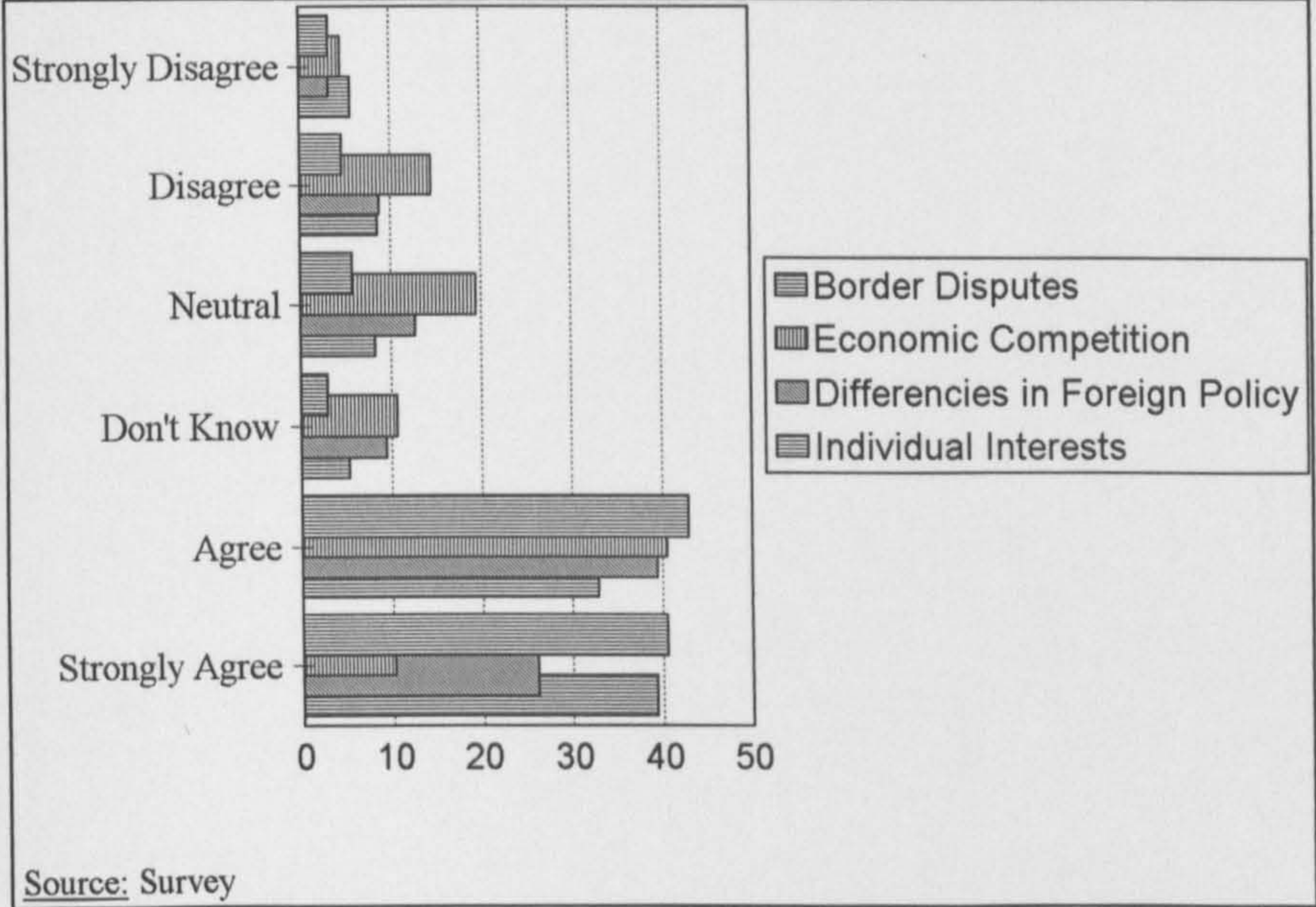
Whatever have been, or should be, the main policy concerns of the GCC in practice its functioning and effectiveness has been affected by ongoing disputes between member states. These problems are widely recognised - indeed in the citizen survey most were aware of how these problems affected the GCC's capacity to meet its objectives.



A number of earlier studies have looked at the attitudes towards the problems of the GCC. Al-'Esa & al-Manofi (1984) studied public opinions towards the problems encountered by the GCC. They found that nearly one-third of the sample that they studied believed that border disputes constituted a stumbling block to the GCC and that nearly half of the same sample believed that citizens dare not criticise the GCC owing to the absence of political freedom and liberties within the Gulf states. Obied (1996) also studied elite attitudes towards the GCC's foreign policies. Several other studies have provide a descriptive account of the GCC problems (e.g. al-Alkim (1994), Nakhleh (1986), Schofield (1994), ... etc.).

Of the different specific problems confronting the GCC some in particular are identified in the survey as being of especial importance (Figure 11.7). Politico-geographical problems are critical, the persistence of boundary disputes between member states, and sovereignty. The latter is expressed in terms of the striving for 'individual interests' by member states, preventing greater cooperation. Specifically these differences become reflected in conflicts over foreign policy between the states.

Figure 11.7 Sample Attitudes toward the GCC Problems by Percentage:

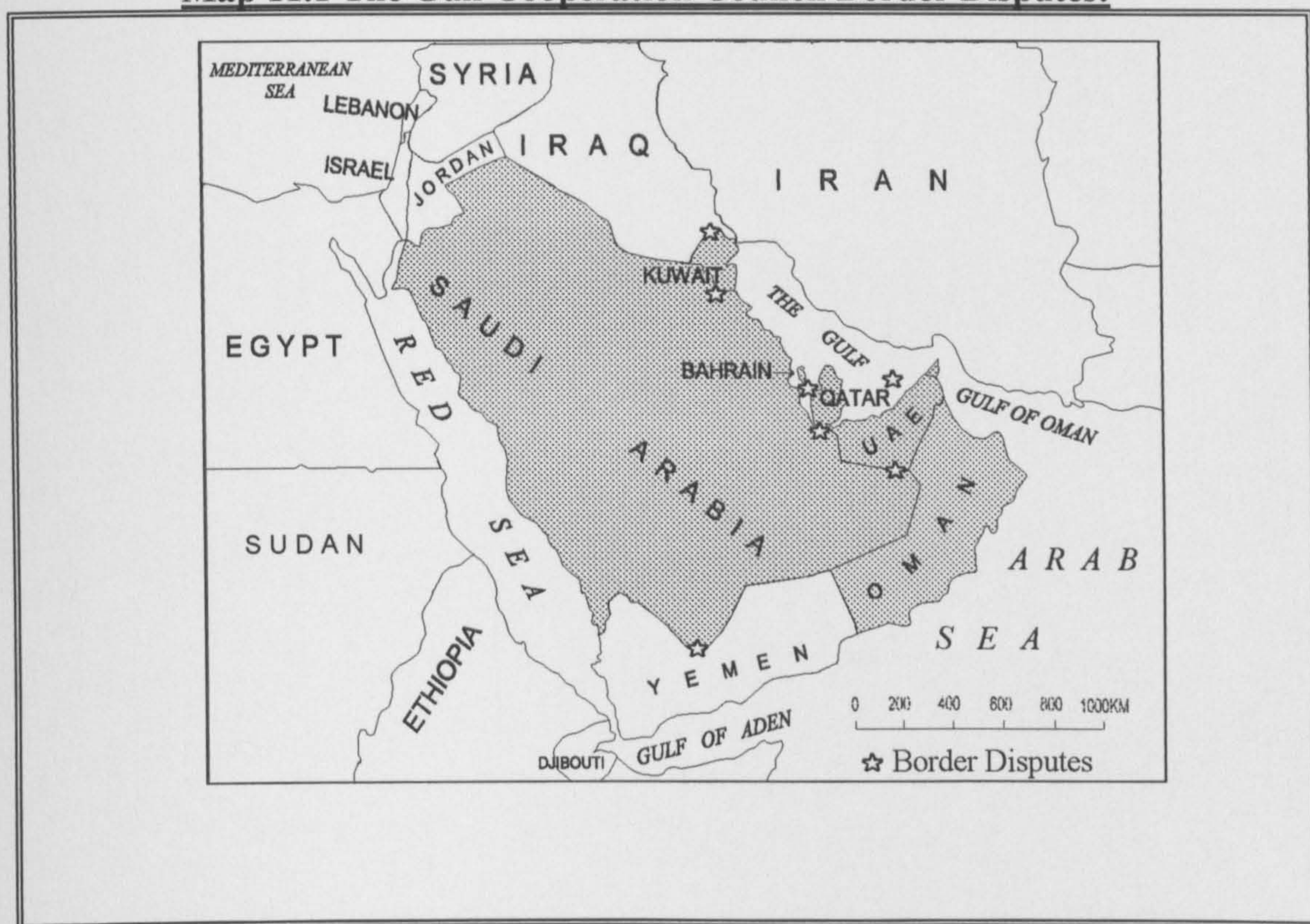




### 1. Border Disputes:

The lack of any sense of political unity was the major factor that hindered the Gulf states from becoming one integrated state following the end of the British protection. Part of the region's disunity stemmed from the various border problems which continue to be one of the major challenges facing the member states of the GCC. In some cases these problems have led to direct confrontation between the member states, while it remain true that each of the GCC member states is presently involved in a border dispute with one or more of its neighbours (Map 11.1).

**Map 11.1 The Gulf Cooperation Council Border Disputes:**



Mushkour (1993) argued that a look at the historical role of the British empire in drawing up the area's borders would help in understanding the current boundary problems. Numerous historical treaties were signed under the British protection. The escalation of the border disputes stems from a desire on the part of the Gulf states to expand their sovereignties. Key here is that control of more oil resources lies at the root of most of the border disputes; as Schofield (1997) points out that "[d]ifficulties



have arisen in the recent years in those instances where oil fields straddle international boundaries or where, in the case of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, no international boundary exists. [...] In November 1992 Saudi Arabia decided to proceed with [the] development of the Shaibah oil field (referred to as Zarara by the UAE), which straddles the kingdom's border with the principle shaikhdom of the UAE, and Abu Dhabi" (p.133). Paradoxically, the emergence of the GCC seems to have exacerbated the border problems because of its reassertion of the sovereignty rights of member states. Discussing the persistence of border disputes among several of the GCC member states, Gause III (1994), argues

"The fact remains that the GCC states, united by similar political systems and many common interests towards the outside world, perceive their interests differently on a number of questions. They come together in a crisis, like the combination of the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War that gave birth to the organization in 1981, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. But when the crisis passes, the differing perspectives and disputes among them creep back into the foreground. Each of the states clearly prefer to deal with external powers on security issues directly, not through the GCC. Each of the member states is extremely hesitant to give up any aspect of its sovereignty [...]. Most noticeably, border disputes that shrink into the background in the face of immediate threats tend to resurface when the regional scene quiets down." (Gause III: 130).

The issue of sovereignty has been favoured at the expense of inter-state cooperation and specifically of establishing 'open borders'. Mushkour (1993) and Schofield (1994) tie the persistent border disputes among the member states of the GCC to their inordinate preoccupation with issues of national sovereignty. This concern has led the GCC member states to prioritise their own interests, giving thereby rise to intense rivalries within the organisation and ruling out the possibility of these states negotiating a permanent settlement of their border disputes. Al-Kuwaiz



(1992), the Ex-GCC Secretary-General Assistant for Economic Affairs, has (recently) expressed his disappointment at the failure of the GCC to sort out its border disputes. As can be recalled from the discussion in Chapter 8, the political elite also affirmed the negative impact that the persistence of such problems has had on the GCC's efforts to establish extensive cooperation among the member states.

Not unexpectedly then of the citizens surveyed, the majority (83%) were agreed that border disputes between member states are a major source of conflict inside the organisation. These results reflect the level of awareness of one of the more intractable dilemmas hindering GCC progress and which threaten the existence of the organisation. They also highlight and emphasise the magnitude and spread of the border disputes problem over the GCC territories.

Table 11.2 Attitudes to the Border Disputes, by Nationality:

Value Label	Nationality			
	<i>Kuwaiti</i>	<i>Qatari</i>	<i>Other GCC</i>	<i>Total</i>
Strongly Disagree	11	6	2	19
Disagree	16	9	3	28
Neutral	20	12	2	34
Agree	133	99	21	253
Strongly Agree	77	144	18	239
Don't Know	13	4	0	17
Total	270	274	46	590
<b>Level of Sig.:</b>				
$\chi^2$ : 38.087 <i>df</i> : 10 $\alpha$ : 0.000				

2. Economic Competition:

Not unexpectedly, as all its member states, with the exception of Bahrain, are oil rich and, by implication, oil dependent economies, economic cooperation figures highly on the GCC's agenda of priorities. Where one of the main factors that motivated the creation of the GCC was the similarity of their economies, for a third of the political elite economic cooperation is seen as the most beneficial area of cooperation among the member states of the GCC. Under the GCC charter, economic cooperation among the member states of the organisation is set within the objective of coordinating, and even more importantly, integrating the policies of the member states into a common market, and ultimately merging the economies of the six member



states into a single economic entity. However, this must be seen as a long-term goal, if not possibly rhetoric.

Much of the literature (al-Rumaihi (1983), al-Kuwari (1986)) argues that aggressive economic competition and rivalry among the member states is one of the main obstacles confronting the GCC and hindering its aim of full integration. This aggressive competition continues to go unabated due, at least in part, to the failure of the GCC member states to implement the Economic and Tariff Agreement signed as long ago as 1981 (see Appendix C). In regard to the inability of the GCC states to agree on a single tariff structure and the underlying causes of such problems, Guase III (1994) argues According to Gause III, 1996, "In trade and industrial policy, the Gulf states also act to protect certain economic interests and to accomplish political goals as well. The difficulties that have been encountered in negotiating a single tariff structure and a common market among the Gulf monarchies through the GCC are attributable in large measure to individual governments efforts to protect certain industries and interests in their countries." (p. 56). However, only 6.5% of the political elite believed that economic rivalry within the GCC hampers cooperation among the member states of this organisation. Reflecting the view portrayed more usually in a senior civil servant in the GCC Secretariat- General (Elite 2) argued that economic competition among the member states *is* one of the main problems that the GCC faces, stressing that "every member state is trying to compete by adopting the same project that another state has already adopted [...] Therefore, economic competition is one of the main obstacles and it is only by the adoption of the Unified Economic Treaty that this problem will be solved...provided the GCC members implement it".

One example of competition is that, in stead of cooperating on joint economic programmes that would help ensure greater economic complementarity, most of the GCC members have embarked on similar industrial programmes grouped around activities such as petrochemicals, the gas industry, etc.. In an interview with Radio Qatar (The Issues and Views Programme (1996)), al-Nafaisi (a Kuwaiti academic and an expert on the GCC) reflected on the current reality of economic and political



cooperation within the GCC thus: “[...] I think that there is no integration whatsoever in the economic and political fields [...] And my evidence [in support of this claim] is the spread of identical economic projects in the GCC states”. (The Issues and Views Programme, p. 261). What is lacking are joint enterprises which stress coordination rather than competition among the member states (Angell, 1987). Clearly, these problems of economic competition are widely perceived as obstacles to GCC cooperation by citizens, and that these attitudes are broadly similar regardless of nationality (Table 11.3).

**Table 11.3 Sample's Attitudes towards the Economic Rivalry within the GCC & Differences in Foreign Policy by Nationality:**

Value Label	Economic Competition			*Differences in Foreign Policy		
	Kuwaiti	Qatari	Other GCC Citizens	Kuwaiti	Qatari	Other GCC Citizens
Strongly Disagree	13	13	1	14	4	1
Disagree	38	40	8	29	18	5
Neutral	49	56	10	32	39	4
Agree	114	109	16	98	121	14
Strongly Agree	27	27	6	69	67	18
Don't Know	29	29	5	28	24	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>46</b>

### *3. Foreign Policy Conflicts between Member States:*

Coordination of the foreign policies of the member states in pursuit of a integrated foreign policy is, under the terms of the GCC charter, a major objective of the organisation. Though the GCC has shown more concern for policy coordination in the foreign affairs field after 1990, foreign policies amongst Gulf states remain, according to most observers, largely contradictory. Thus, Oudah (1993) asserted that the most noticeable aspect of the GCC's foreign policy is its fragmentation; and most scholars have characterised the foreign policies of the organisation as lacking consensus. Al-Jasser (1994) criticised the GCC's 'foreign policy', arguing that differences in policies gave rise to bilateral cooperation between some GCC member states, undermining the overall unity of the organisation. He also argued that outside observers (see, for instance, al-Kuwari (1992)) expected the disintegration of the GCC because of the incompatible policies so often adopted by the member states. It is



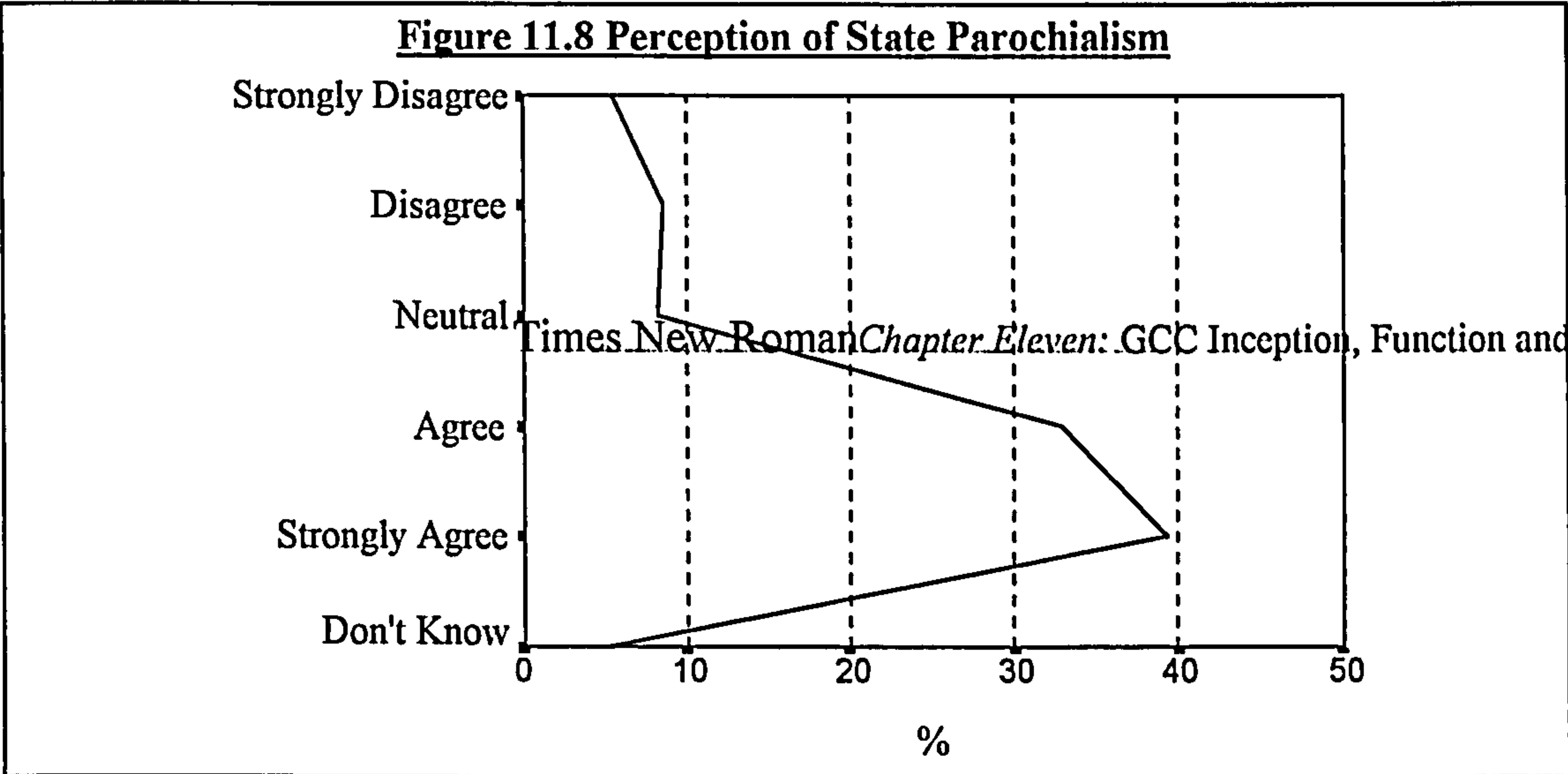
broadly true that the level of inter-state policy coordination has been very low, owing often to the persistent border disputes between member states and the insistence on their sovereignty. Incompatibility of policy positions among GCC member countries are perhaps best evident in the foreign affairs field. Thus, while some of the GCC states have established diplomatic relations with Israel, some still refuse to do so, and while some of the GCC states maintain diplomatic relations with either Iraq or Iran, some do not. The insistence of member states on pursuing independent policies has been and remains a divisive factor that threatens the unity (and effectiveness) of the GCC. The lack of harmonisation of policy was commonly cited by citizens, directly refuting the opinion of the elite.

#### *4. Member State Parochialism:*

Member state parochialism is undoubtedly one of the stumbling blocks in the way of GCC progress. One member of the elite accepted that the emergence of conflicting member states' interests has been one of the main problems facing the GCC, stating that: "[e]very member state is convinced that its own agenda is right for the rest of the member states, whereas in fact it reflects only the interests of that member state" (Elite 1). Nour-al-Deen (1993) argued that the GCC has been shackled by the problem of this parochialism. This parochialism has had a clear effect on the perceptions of the GCC. According to the interviews with GCC scholars reported in the Gulf newspapers before every summit, the interests the Gulf region at large are generally overlooked by member states, where these are more concerned with forcing their own agenda on fellow member states.

Clearly, Gulf citizens are acutely aware of the problem (Figure (11.8)). Nearly 40% of the sample alone 'strongly agreed' that the existence of state parochialism within the GCC was a problem for the organisation, while in all nearly three-quarters considered it a problem at all. These results suggest that there is a strong awareness among citizens of state parochialism, that it tends to dominate the politics of the GCC, and that it has fragmenting and conflictual outcomes.





**Question:** Are the GCC member states concerned more about their own individual interests rather about the collective ones?

**B. GCC Membership:**

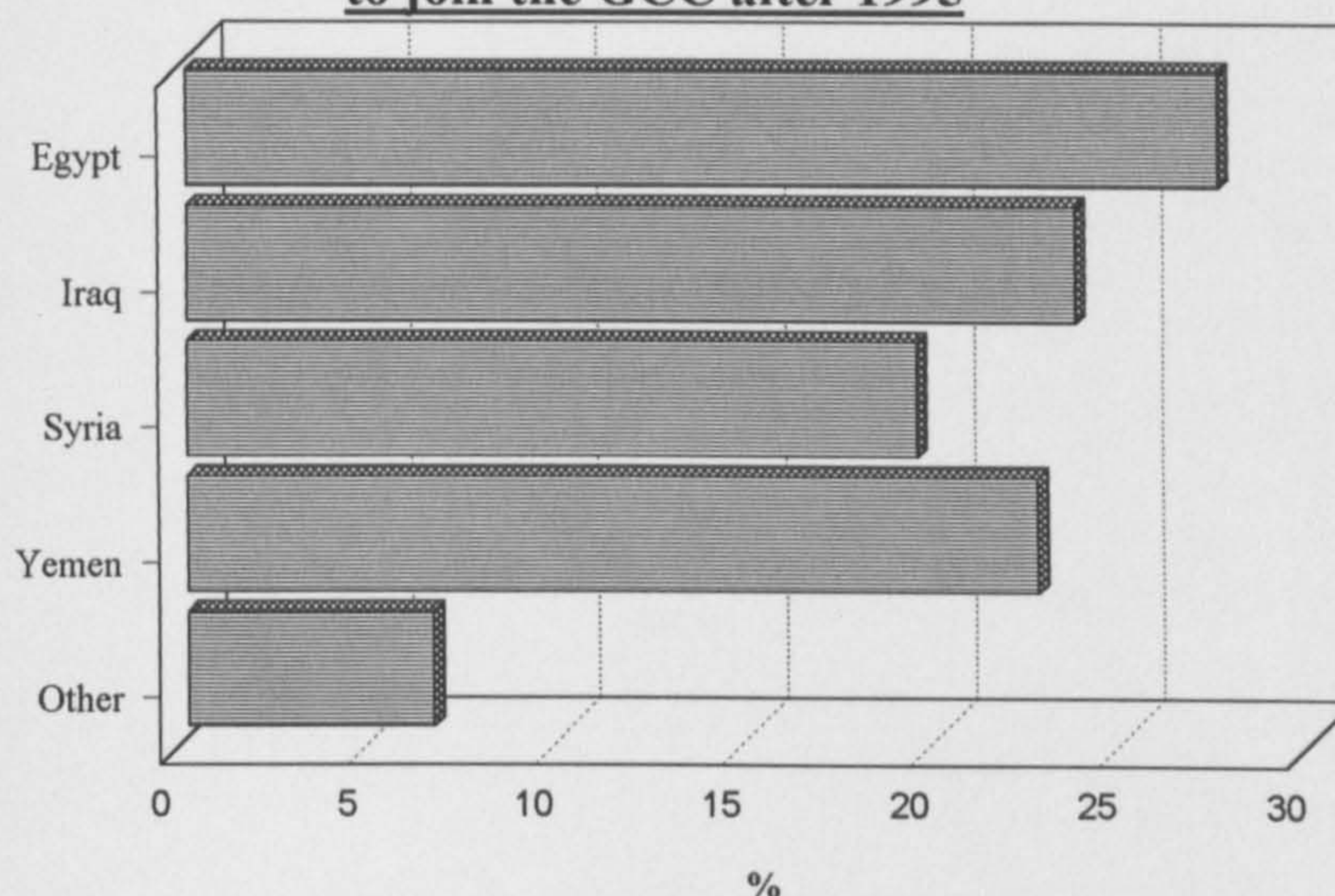
According to Article 5 of the GCC Charter, “The Cooperation Council shall be formed of the six states that participated in the foreign ministers meeting held in Riyadh on February 4, 1981.” No article in the GCC Charter addresses the matter of potential additional membership. The provisions of Article 20, bearing on the possible amendment of the Charter, do not, however, preclude the possibility of the member states agreeing unanimously to include other states in the GCC. Shafeeq (1989) criticised the political decision to limit membership to the original six member states and exclude neighbouring Arab Gulf states.

Nevertheless, the GCC Charter did not mention the possibility of accepting other members in the organisation, and insisted that the amendment of Article 20 could be undertaken only in the case of a unanimous decision by the original member states. Nakhleh (1986) attributed the ‘closed’ membership of the GCC to the fact that only these states share a similar political system, have similar economies and are largely populated by the same Islamic sect. Shuriedeh (1995) affirmed that the GCC member states think that the closed-membership of only six countries gives them a better chance of achieving desirable levels of cooperation. Media in the other Arab countries, however, characterise the organisation as simply a ‘club of the rich’.



Turning to the citizen sample most opposed an open-membership policy by the GCC; nearly two-third of the total respondents insist that the GCC should have a closed-membership, while only 15.4% favoured expanding its membership. Of those who answered the question as to which countries might join the GCC, the most frequently chosen was Egypt. This is not surprising given that the survey was in part conducted in Kuwait, in which Egyptian military aid had played such a key part (among Arab countries) in 1990. In another study of Kuwaiti perceptions towards the GCC, al-'Essa & al-Manofi (1985) found that 27.5% of their total sample chose Egypt as the country they would prefer to see as a new member of the GCC.

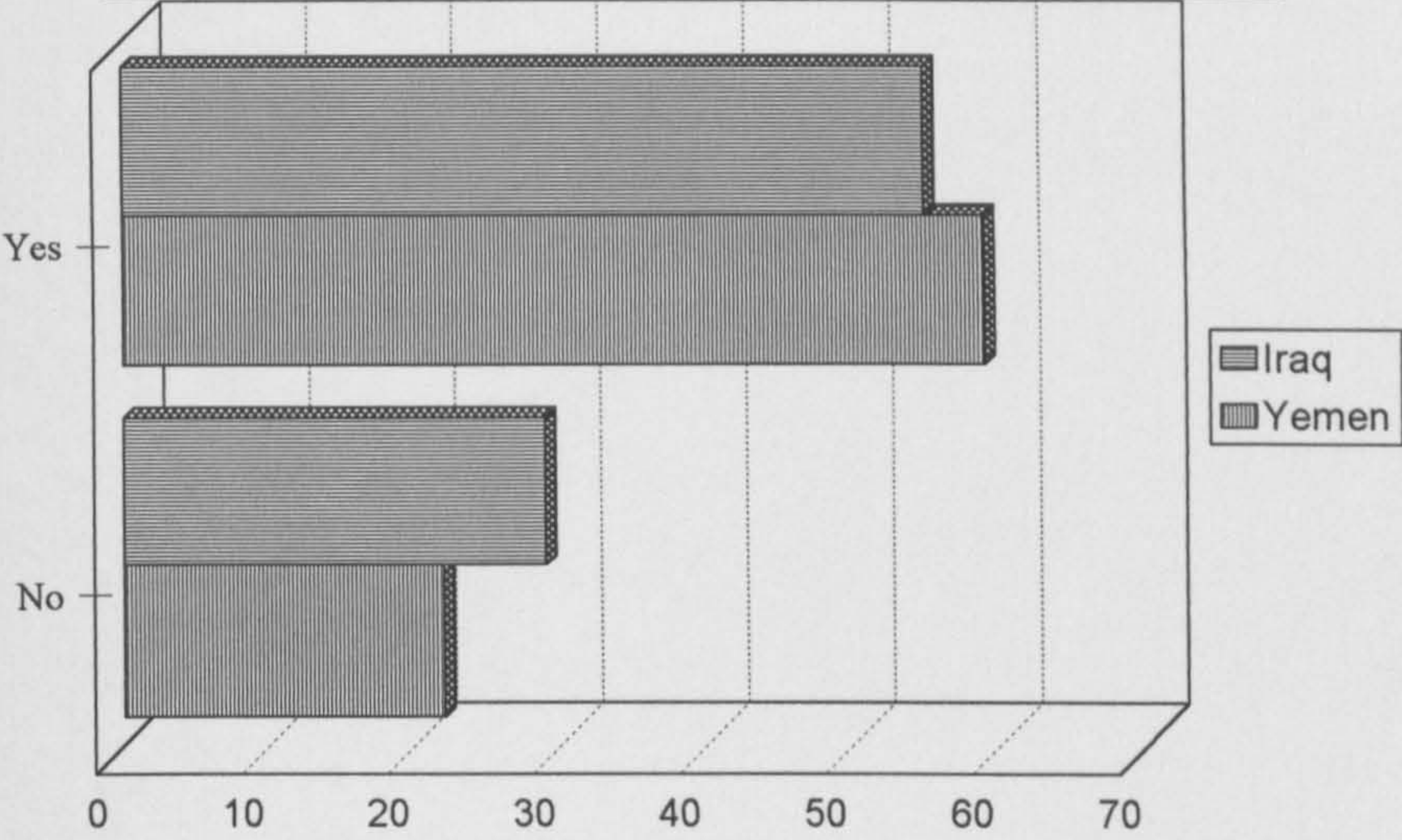
**Figure 11.9 Attitude toward the Most Important Countries to join the GCC after 1995**



Source: Survey



**Figure 11.10 The Kuwaiti Attitudes toward joining Iraq & Yemen in the GCC membership before 1990**



**Source:** Al-'Essa & Al-Manofi (1985)

While al-'Esa and al-Manofi's earlier (1985) study showed that more than half of their sample would like to see Iraq join the GCC, only 14.7% of this study's total sample approved of a GCC open-membership policy and as few as a quarter of this number approved of the idea of Iraq joining the GCC. Similarly, while the 1985 study revealed that as many as 59% of their total sample chose Yemen (as the Arab state they would like to see join the GCC), only 22.7% in this survey showed a preference for this country. Figures (11.9) and (11.10) show the marked shift that seems to have affected the attitudes in the aftermath of the Second Gulf war. Clearly, where half of the study sample were Kuwaiti citizens, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Yemen's support for the invasion, explained the shift in attitudes.

**C. The Voting System:**

The Supreme Council of the GCC is the highest and only authority that takes decisive decisions. Hence, power is centralised in the hands of this Supreme Council, despite the fact that the GCC Charter is vague regarding the voting system. Articles 9 and 13 elaborate on the nature of the voting system in the Supreme and Ministerial councils thus: "Resolution of the Supreme Council on substantive matters shall be carried by unanimous approval of the member states participating in the voting, while



resolution on procedural matters shall be carried by a majority vote.” (p.6). Thus, in both Supreme and Ministerial councils, unanimity is required for resolutions bearing on substantive matters and a majority vote for procedural matters. Nakleh (1986) argued that the unanimity requirement can only serve to undermine the process of decision-making, as not all policies and resolutions are bound to satisfy each and every member state. In a study of Arab League, which also insists on unanimity, al-Baharnah (1993) argued that it regularly hindered the adoption of crucial resolutions, as in the case of adopting a unified stand against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Attitudes of the Gulf citizens towards the insistence on unanimity is complex. Most did favour changing the system to a majority one, though by a slim margin (53%). Yet many of these would like to see the voting system changed into a majority one only under some special circumstances (e.g., internal or external threats). On the whole, there seems to be a pronounced perception among the sample that the unanimity requirement adopted by the GCC is both an undesirable (and problematic) procedure and that this particular aspect of the organisation’s political machinery should be changed or at least amended.

#### **D. Commission for Settlement of Disputes:**

One of the GCC pro forma institutions is the Commission for Settlement of Disputes whose function was defined under the terms of Article 10 of the GCC Charter thus: “If a dispute arises over interpretation or implementation of the Charter and such a dispute is not resolved within the Ministerial or the Supreme Council, the Supreme Council may refer such dispute to the Commission for the Settlement of Disputes.” (p.6). Article 10 further specifies that the Supreme Council shall establish the composition of the Commission for every case on an 'ad hoc' basis in accordance with the nature of the dispute.' (p. 6).

Clearly, the often reiterated claim among GCC officials that there are no disputes between the member states is evidently false. For example, Qatar took its border dispute case with Bahrain to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) after the



failure of the GCC to find a solution satisfactory to both sides. In an interview with Radio Qatar, al-Obaidly (the former Head of Section of International Organisations at Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs) argued that Qatar took its case to the international court only after the Commission for the Settlement of Disputes failed to settle it (to the satisfaction of both parties) (see, The Issues and Views Programme (1996)). The case demonstrates the weakness of the Commission and the ability of member states to ignore its deliberations, if they wish. Many of the citizen responses (40%) indicate the need for strengthening the Commission, though a slightly higher proportion were unsure on the point- perhaps not surprising when it is remembered that the CSD is a somewhat shadowy organisation.

In an interview with the London-based Middle-East Broadcasting Centre (MBC) about the role of the CSD in solving disputes among the GCC member states, Sheikh Jameel al-Hojailan, the new Secretary-General, insisted that the authority of the SCD depends crucially on the commitment of the member states to abide by whatever decisions it might take. He argued that "Any decision taken by the CSD should be accepted [by all parties involved in the dispute]. For example, in the case of the Bahraini/Qatari dispute, both countries preferred to accept the Saudi mediation. Such mediation will allow for more flexibility and a speedy resolution for their dispute. For in so far as they accepted the mediation they should also [be willing to] accept the decision of the mediating party". Clearly, as this declaration of the Secretary-General implies the decisions of the CSD are too easily ignored. One way would be to raise the status of the CSD to a juridical institution.

#### **11. 4. Conclusions:**

The sample's perceptions of the GCC shows a keen awareness of the existence and nature of the problems limiting the GCC's drive towards greater integration of the politics and economies of the member states. The majority of the sample agreed that these problems are not only hampering meaningful cooperation between the member states, but are actually threatening the unity of this organisation.



It was also perceived that the existence of the above problems could affect the internal and external security of the GCC member states and that inter-state border disputes and the failure to resolve them are limiting cooperation.

Compared with the results obtained by studies conducted prior to 1990, the investigation here has revealed a shift in citizen attitudes towards the possibility and/or necessity of admitting new Arab countries into the GCC. al-'Esa & al-Manofi's (1985) study showed that Iraq and Yemen were the two countries most preferred by Kuwaiti citizens to join the GCC. However, this study showed that most of the sample would not like to see the GCC membership made open to new countries. Such a shift in attitudes towards a more hardened position could be attributed to the impact of the second Gulf war.

Respondents also showed a fairly common stance towards the 'unanimity voting' adopted by the GCC and the need to amend such a voting system on account of it creating unnecessary obstacles for the GCC's in its efforts to achieve greater cooperation between the member states. The political crisis which, for instance, erupted between Qatar and Saudi Arabia over the appointment of a new GCC Secretary-General in 1995 could never have emerged if the GCC did not insist on unanimity. Moreover, where there are disputes between member states, mediation should be achieved 'locally' through bolstering the CSD.

It might be argued that the lack of member state cooperation is the product of an unnecessarily complicated bureaucracy and the political elite's lack of appreciation of the challenges facing the organisation. While the elite consider that the GCC is not facing any critical problems, the citizens believe otherwise. The political elite's efforts to censor the organisation's internal problems and divisions - in an effort to suggest the unity of the organisation - have been ineffective, and seem only to have accentuated the citizens' sense of alienation from and distrust of the GCC.



## **Evaluation of GCC Member State Cooperation: Citizen Perceptions**

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This chapter looks at citizens perceptions of the GCC's attempts to formulate coordinated policies between member states, as well as whether there has been any perceptible changes in the policies and objectives of the organisation over the last few years, and, in particular, in the wake of the Gulf war. The first aspect looks at specific policies - those affecting the environment, the economies, foreign affairs and education. The second asks whether citizens consider that since the 1990 Gulf crisis a greater sense of unity among Gulf states has become apparent through the activities of the GCC.

### **12.2. Policy Cooperation:**

From its creation, the GCC emphasised the need for cooperation between the member states in a number of spheres. Though security is a prominent concern of all GCC member states, the GCC Charter did not make any explicit reference to it. Some commentators have argued that significant cooperation had been achieved in the political, diplomatic, military, and economic fields (Peterson, 1988). But while such claims have been made, citizen attitudes have been critical of the efforts of the organisation. In a reaction to an interview given by Bishara, the GCC Ex-Secretary-General, to Radio Qatar before the GCC summit in November 1995, one concerned GCC citizen protested: "Bishara said that during the last 14 years the GCC was mainly concerned with the Iran/Iraq war.... Assuming that is indeed the case, then why the unrelenting insistence that the council has made solid achievements? It is pointless [...] for Mr. Bishara to keep reiterating claims about the GCC achievements.... Are these achievements no more than an illusion?", (p. 293). Another citizen stated that "[m]ost of the GCC's citizens are highly convinced that its achievements have been frustrated by the media, but I believe



that there has been nothing concrete about these achievements.” (Issues and Opinions Programme, p.295, 1996)

Citizen perceptions of GCC policy cooperation reflect the perceived success that the organisation has had in the implementation of the Charter’s objectives. The relevant goals of the Charter are defined in Article 4, emphasising the need to draw up compatible policies among the member states in such areas as the economy, finance, commerce, customs, communications, education, social welfare, health, information, tourism, legislation and administration. Citizen attitudes towards some of these policy fields were assessed, beginning by ranking their importance.

Political cooperation (e.g., harmonising foreign policies position towards developments in the international arena) was seen as a top priority for the GCC, far outweighing the significance of the next most important policy field, economic cooperation (Table (12.1). Both the environment and ‘other’ sectors came low as a priority, where 60.2% of the total responses perceived the environment sector as a ‘not important’ field of cooperation. These findings are not difficult to rationalise. Political cooperation is not only central to any form of integration but a prerequisite to all other types of cooperation. As was reported in previous chapters (chapters 8 and 11) a majority of the citizens were aware of the tensions that persist among the member states as a result of still unresolved border disputes and were of the view that border disputes have been a stumbling block in the way of extending cooperation between the organisation’s members. It was also found that the majority of the citizens sample thought that the major problems facing the GCC are caused by a failure of the GCC members to harmonise foreign policies (see section 11.3, chapter 11). In view of this, it is not surprising that political cooperation was viewed as a priority.

Table 12.1 Citizen Attitudes of the Significance of Policy Fields for GCC Cooperation:

Cooperative Sector	Level of Importance									
	Very Important		Important		Don't Know		Less Important		Not Important	
	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%
Environment	43	7.3	42	7.1	27	4.6	117	19.8	355	60.2
Economic	117	19.8	313	53.1	1	0.2	115	19.5	40	6.8
Social	63	10.7	94	15.9	8	1.4	280	47.5	139	23.6
Political	354	60	136	23.1	3	0.5	64	10.8	29	4.9
Other	13	2.2	10	1.7	100	16.9	8	1.4	8	1.4



12.3. Attitudes Towards Key Policies:

Foreign Policy and foreign policy issues are normally the preserve of political elites. For the GCC, foreign policy coordination is arguably one of the most challenging tasks because of the inevitable conflict between member states' interests. Certainly, the political elite perceived such conflicts in foreign policies to be one of the main problems facing the GCC (Chapter 8). Citizens too express similar attitudes, as is clear from the Gulf newspapers before every summit. Political sensitivity of the specific issues has hindered Arab scholars from discussing them openly. Some of the literature has discussed the foreign policies of the GCC. Thus, Guase (1994) asserted that “[t]he sense of frustration within the GCC secretariat on the lack of progress in a number of areas is also evident in Gulf public opinion” (p.132). He also argued that the GCC foreign policy has often been undermined by the conflicting positions adopted by the member states. Yet, as Table 12.2 emphasises public attitudes favour the production of common foreign policy stances by member states, and that the GCC is looked at as the organisation which should be meeting this need.

Table 12.2 Citizen Attitudes to the Significance of Specific GCC Policy Fields:

Policy Field	Level of Importance									
	Very Important		Important		Don't Know		Not Important		Don't Know	
	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%
Foreign Affairs	467	79.2	103	17.5	5	0.8	8	1.4	5	0.8
Economic	415	70.3	162	27.5	1	0.2	3	0.5	4	0.7
Education	326	55.3	240	40.7	3	0.5	17	2.9	2	0.3
Health	283	48	266	45.1	5	0.8	23	3.9	6	1
Immigration	151	25.6	259	43.9	42	7.1	109	18.5	20	3.4
Security & Military	550	93.2	33	5.6	1	0.2	1	0.2	4	0.7

Clearly, as Table (12.2) also indicates considerable importance is attached to economic cooperation. This derives essentially from the fact that member states share similar types of economies. Yet, as one member of the elite sample asserted, the member states have retained their previous policies dating from before the GCC accentuating



competitiveness. According to al-Kuwaiz (1988), the ex-GCC Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs, “[t]he structural make-up of the economies of GCC states necessitates embarking on a set of projects that would enable the [GCC states’] to enlarge productivity and provide more job opportunities for citizens, [as well as] minimise the negative effects and aspects of cooperation ...” and that cooperation “required strengthening the effectiveness of the provisions and resolutions of [GCC] ministerial committees. This means activating the executive branches of those committees [...] in each of the member states ....” (p.5).

Discussing how the GCC resolutions and politicise remain largely unimplemented by the member states as a results of lack of institutional mechanisms ensuring that all states abide and enforce these resolutions and policies, al-Kuwaiz (1992) also argued “[t]hough time and effort consuming, the discretionary nature [of GCC policies and resolutions] do not lead to desired results [...] should it not be better, in so far as the aim is closer ties and integration, that these statues and resolutions are made compulsory and binding [on all member states]” (p.5)

The importance of education policy was appreciated by most of the student sample. As Table (12.2) indicates, more than 55% categorised educational policies within the GCC as ‘extremely important’ and as many as 40% of the total responses thought of it as “important”.

Article (4) of the GCC charter describes the benefits of coordinating education policies and emphasises the importance of formulating uniform education regulations (e.g., adoption of unified curricula at all levels of education, and similar university admission requirements). However, cooperation in the field of education remains so far largely a secondary concern for the GCC member states and cooperation of policies in this important field remain all but marginal.

Following the Gulf states Ministers of Education in 1979, the 'Gulf University' was initiated in Bahrain. However, this educational project too faced many problems owing to the political conflicts that plagued the region and following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 the GCC eventually abandoned the project. There had been in



any case a failure to allocate any money to the project. Cooperation in the field of education has proved a challenging task for the GCC owing to the failure of the member states to agree on a single uniform educational system, notably on such issues as a uniform curricula at the various school levels as well on a unified admission system to universities.

In a study of health care and health services in the state of Qatar, al-Thani et. al. (1993) found that 53.3% of the total sample they studied perceived the level of health care and health services to be 'satisfactory enough.' Their study also found that 65% of their total sample assumed that treatment overseas (i.e. Europe and North America) is much superior than it is locally and that only 28.4% of the sample believed local health care to be as good as that available overseas.

The issue of health and health policy is considered important as is clear from the survey - 48% of the total sample regarded it as a 'very important' area of concern for the GCC.

All GCC citizens have access to a free medical care in their respective countries and, owing to this, the financial cost of this sector is very high and rapidly increasing. Chatelus (1990) discussed the problem of expenditure in the health sector in the Arab world, pointing out that the health expenditure ratio in oil countries is much higher than anywhere else in the Arab world and that state expenditure on health among GCC member states is more than half that on education.

While citizens have a right to free medical care in their own state, the GCC has sought to extend this so as to give citizens reciprocal rights between the member states. This has important implications because while standards of health care provision are broadly similar between member states, specialist provision varies. Yet, partly because of bureaucratic problems, these reciprocal rights have yet to be implemented. While citizens have expressed a clear demand for such rights, their implementation has yet to be achieved.



Establishing greater military cooperation is one of the most challenging objectives of the GCC. Cooperation in this field has obviously become more important after the 1990 war, and takes a variety of forms. As far as security cooperation is concerned this is divisible by 'scale', domestic, regional, and international (Nakhleh (1986). Domestic security cooperation involves the exchange of data on the numbers and activities of foreign workers, citizens, and organisations in GCC member states, and on political, ideological, and religious dissidents. Regional security cooperation centres on the organising of joint military exercises, the exchange of military information about troops and training as well as the coordination of a common position towards any regional threats. Finally, international security cooperation involves the establishment of common approaches to arms acquisition and the coordination of the member states' foreign and defence policies.

While, as Table (12.2) shows, the greatest importance was attached to this form of cooperation among all the policy fields, in fact such cooperation is far from being achieved. This is not to say that there has been no progress, Nakhleh (1986) stressed that the GCC member states have in fact agreed on some of the important issues (like the creation of 'Desert Shield', a GCC army made up of divisions from all member states), but have, nevertheless, disagreed on others. Kuwait and Qatar's disagreement on the Security Treaty best illustrates the level of disunity and the lack of consensus that often constrain the GCC. Qatar refused to sign the agreement on account of its border disputes with Saudi Arabia and the Kuwaiti parliament took objection to a clause in the treaty granting the right of 'hot-pursuit' of GCC citizens to other member states, deeming this right a violation of its national constitution and national sovereignty of each of the states. Yet, nearly all sample respondents agreed that 'If one of the GCC member states is under a major external threat, the other members should assist', and that member states should have the support of the rest of the constituent members of the GCC (see Table (12.3) below). In part this reflects the advantages membership should have on the defence of the small state, whose vulnerability was clearly evident in the 1990 war. The feeling was that most considered that the GCC had moved towards a more coherent defense policy after the Gulf war.



#### 12.4 Perceptions of, the GCC, Political and Economic Integration:

This section assesses and examines two types of issues: what citizens perceive to be the nature of the union the GCC should pursue, on the one hand, and whether there is a perceived need for much wider cooperation in the political and economic fields. Attitudes to these questions will throw some light on the level and nature of cooperation among the member states of the council, and, by implication, on the degree of success the GCC has had in pursuing its guiding objectives.

Closer political and economic cooperation between the GCC member states is of importance not only to the economic security and political stability of these states but to the political stability of the region as a whole. An economic union would benefit each in overcoming such problems as the economic recession that hit the Gulf states in the mid 1980s (see, among others, Nakhleh (1986)) and would also facilitate a uniform economic policy in such areas as oil prices, etc. A political union would enable them to counter any attempts at destabilisation and any acts of outside aggression.

In their reaction to the question of what kind of union the GCC should pursue, over 60% of the total sample endorsed the idea that the GCC should aim at a political union (i.e. move towards one state). Noting the GCC's failure to make distinct positive moves towards political unity, al-Kuwari argues that "[b]y 1990, [...] a decade after the establishment of the GCC, the reformers recognise that their hopes have been frustrated, and that the GCC is not aiming at (attaining) a single state. [...] [where] [...] the council member states are today even further removed [than previously] from achieving such unity." (al-Khaleej; 4th Nov., 1992). Such support for the greater political unity of the GCC member states reflects the strong historical and social ties and bonds that have always united them. This call for unity can also be seen as the result of a sense of frustration on the part of citizens with an organisation whose efforts continue to be undermined by such long-standing problems as border disputes, and foreign policy differences.



The preference for political unity is matched by a clear demand for greater political and economic cooperation. Nearly 90% of the sample ‘agreed’ that the ‘GCC should proceed much further than it has so far towards economic and political union’, indicating that the majority are far from satisfied with the efforts undertaken by the GCC to date. al-Kuwari (al-Khaleej; 4th Nov., 1992.) asserted the GCC citizens have waited patiently for the GCC leaders to orientate the organisation more towards the unity of its member states. al-Kuwaiz (1987), an ex-Secretary General for economic affairs, attributes the slow process in the area of economic cooperation to a number of reasons. First, the necessary harmonisation of governmental institutions in the member states requires more time so that the local implications of such changes can be more fully evaluated.

**Table 12.3 Citizen Attitudes towards the GGC political and economic Integration, by percentage:**

Issue Type	Attitude Level					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Issue 1	7.8	10.5	16.8	34.3	25.1	5.3
Issue 2	3.9	5.9	10.7	45.9	29.2	3.9
Issue 3	7.8	11.9	12.9	27.1	34.4	5.9
Issue 4	2.5	1.9	4.7	33.7	55.9	1.2
Issue 5	2.4	0	1.4	16.4	78.8	1
Issue 6	5.8	7.1	10.3	28.8	29	19
Issue 7	4.1	9.3	16.9	30.2	25.3	14.1
Issue 8	7.8	17.1	18.5	33.7	13.9	8.8
Issue 9	2.5	2.9	10.7	41.4	31	11.5

- Key to Table:**
- Issue 1: For Qatar and Kuwait, as small countries, membership of the GCC is essential to meet their defence/security needs.
- Issue 2: There are more similarities than differences amongst the citizens of member states of the GCC.
- Issue 3: The long term goal of cooperation between Gulf states should be political union, i.e. one state.
- Issue 4: The GCC should proceed much further than it has so far towards economic and political union.
- Issue 5: If one of the GCC member states is under a major external threat, the other members should assist.
- Issue 6: Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the GCC adopted a common defence policy to counter such a threat
- Issue 7: Being a member of the GCC has become more important following the 1990 war.
- Issue 8: Owing to the establishment of the GCC, relations between members states have improved.
- Issue 9: A common GCC set of immigration policies would strengthen the ability of member states to control the numbers of foreign workers entering the country.

In their response to the question of whether the emergence of the GCC has brought improved relations among the Gulf states, only 47.6% of the total sample were of the view that the relations among the member states of the GCC have indeed changed for the better. Seen by nationality, however, the attitudes expressed with regard to this



question showed a significantly differentiated distribution; while 59.6% of the total Kuwaiti sample subscribe to the view that relations among the member states have actually taken a turn for the better, only 34.1% of the total Qatari sample adhere to the same opinion ( $\chi^2$ : 67.994  $df$ : 10  $\alpha$ : 0.000). The relatively higher level of scepticism shown by Qatari respondents towards the nature of relations among the member states might be rooted in the border disputes that have only been partially resolved between Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

What is revealing is that there are substantial differences in the strength of attitudes towards the various issues reflected in the variations between those recording 'don't know'. Least uncertainty was apparent towards the need for member states to assist one another during periods of major external threat. Yet, there was a much higher degree of uncertainty that the GCC had been able to live up to expectations in this respect (issue 6), or that the experience of the GCC since the Iraqi invasion had actually brought the member states closer together (issue 7). Yet, significantly, few were uncertain as whether the long term goal of Gulf cooperation should be towards the establishment of political union (issue 3).

### 12.5 Evaluation of GCC Immigration Policies:

Though the general question of immigration had been discussed by many scholars, only a few studies have examined citizen perceptions of the issue and its importance. Al-Kuwari (1992) emphasised the importance of the immigration problem to the political stability of the GCC member states and that it has important implications for the cultural, social, economic, and political aspects of Gulf states.

Immigration in the Gulf is a contentious issue, but one which has different impacts on the separate states of the region. The key question for the GCC is whether it should develop common policies controlling the rate of immigration. Here, citizen reactions are examined to the proposition that 'a common set of GCC immigration policies would strengthen the ability of member states to control the numbers of foreign workers entering the country', their perceptions of the importance of an immigration



policy to the member states of the GCC, whether if the latter treats immigration as a serious issue, and, finally, citizen perceptions of the magnitude of the foreign workforce in their countries.

Clearly, immigration policy is viewed as important. Nearly 70% of the sample characterised the issue as “important”, Table (12.3). The importance of immigration policy has been made even more urgent by the sheer size of the expatriate community in the GCC states. Little differences in these basic opinions was apparent between the Kuwaiti and Qatari samples.

The question of manpower shortages, both quantitative and qualitative, in the labour market of the GCC member states has been the subject of considerable research (see, e.g., al-Kuwari (1996), Findlay (1994); Birks et al (1986), Birks & Sinclair (1989)) reflecting the concern of the GCC countries. In a recent sociological study of the interaction between Qatari nationals and immigrants within the Qatari society, al-Kadhim (1991) examined the social impact of immigration showing how divisive was the issue. Discussing the issue of labour shortages, al-Kuwari (1985) warned of the potential implications of the immigration policies that the GCC countries was adopting. In a much more recent article, published in the UAE daily *al-Khaleej* (Nov. 4th, 1992), al-Kuwari considers the absence of a population policy among the GCC states one of the main future problems for the Gulf rich countries, noting, that “the danger of immigration is no longer a cultural, social, and economic threat, but has nowadays become most fundamentally a political threat. In the majority of the countries of the region, immigration is a danger threatening the very existence of these states and spells the imminent loss of the Arabo-Islamic identity uniting their citizens.” The ever- increasing size of the foreign workforce and the perceived detrimental impact of immigration on the indigenous populations of the member states renders a more concerted GCC effort in tackling immigration problems an even more pressing concern.

Controlling the rate of immigration is a key factor. Asked whether ‘a common GCC set of immigration policies would strengthen the ability of member states to control the numbers of foreign workers entering the country’, 72.4% of the total sample ‘agreed’ with such a proposition (see Table 12.3). Clearly, the results of the survey reveal that the



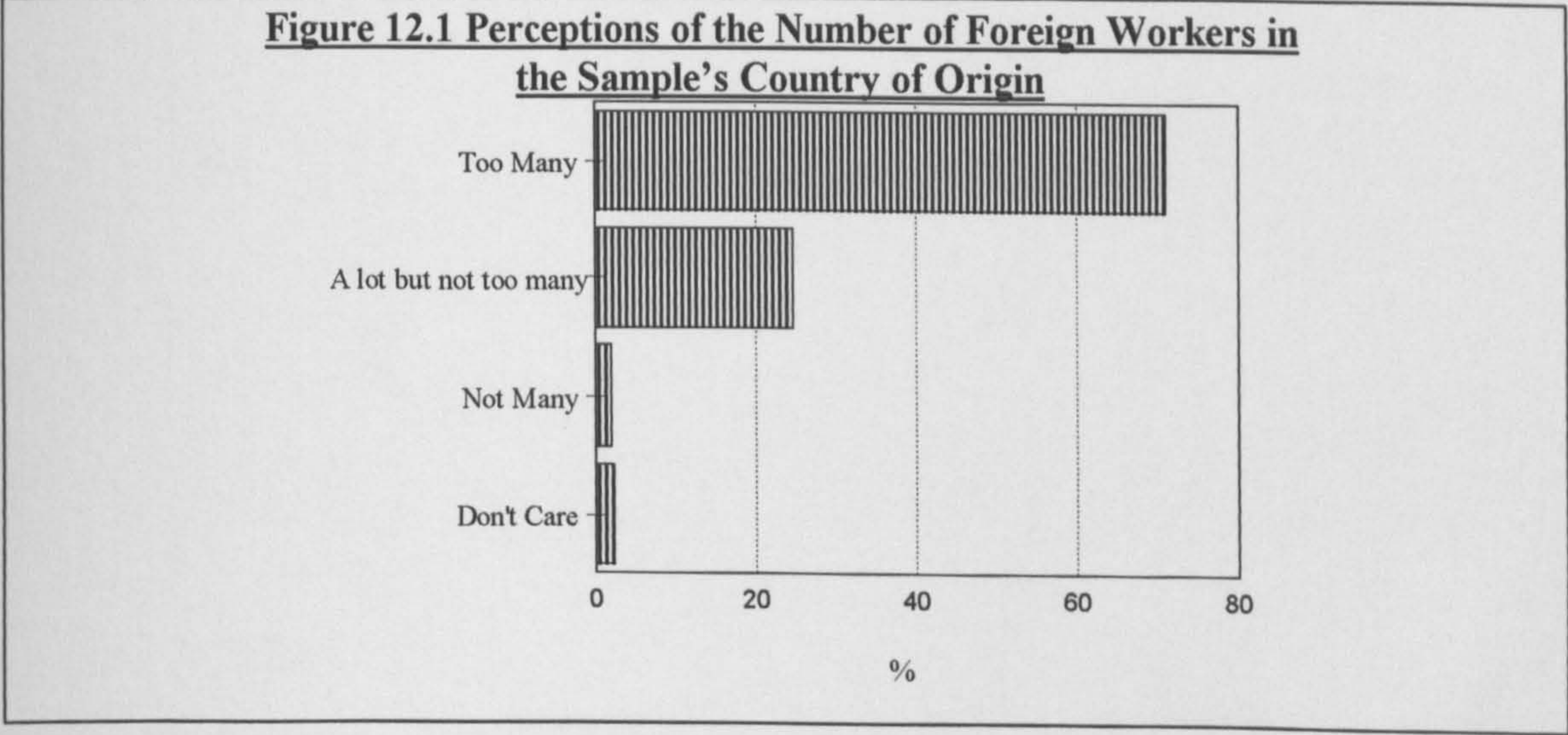
great majority of the sample were agreed on the importance of an immigration policy not only in the context of individual member states but also of the GCC as an entity.

While most considered the GCC should adopt a robust stance towards immigration, the reality is seen otherwise. Asked whether immigration policy is a serious concern of the GCC, over 40% of the total sample were convinced that the organisation is not taking immigration policy as seriously as it should, while only 18% were satisfied with the efforts of the GCC in this area (see table 12.4, issue 2).

The widespread concern about the impact of foreign workforce on the various aspects of the Gulf society was echoed by citizens' perceptions of the size of the foreign labour element in their countries. Over 71% of the total sample quantified the number of foreign workers in their countries as 'too many', testifying, thus, to the fact that the foreign workforce has become, by virtue of its sheer size, a visible 'problem' in the GCC states. The results also testify to the fact that, in spite of the censorship imposed by the GCC member states on the number of immigrants, there is a high level of awareness amongst the educated class of the large numbers of foreign workers in the GCC (Figure 12.1).

Table 12.4 Citizen Attitudes of the Sample towards Immigration Issues:

Type of Issue	Value Label					
	Yes		No		Don't Know	
	<i>Frg</i>	%	<i>Frg</i>	%	<i>Frg</i>	%
Immigration Policy Issue 1	480	81.4	14	2.4	96	16.3
Immigration Policy Issue 2	258	43.7	108	18.3	140	23.7





## 12.6. Citizen Perceptions of Internal Movement, Education & Medical Care entitlement:

This section examines citizen perceptions of internal movement within the GCC states, mutual rights to education and health entitlements within member states and, finally, the GCC's health and education policies.

### *A. Internal movement:*

A recent *Precis of GCC Achievements* (1995: 19-20) stated that the GCC 13th Summit held in Riyadh adopted a resolution replacing passports with identity cards, enabling greater freedom of movement between Gulf states. The task of studying the various aspects of this project, including what the intended Identity Card should be like, was entrusted to the General Secretariat and the UAE, the member state chairing the Council at the time. Al-Bin'ali (1990) pointed out that the GCC citizens would see such a move as helping to crystallise the sense of unity among member states ways. In an interview published in the daily *al-Khaleej* (of 3rd of Nov. 1985), a GCC citizen voiced the argument: "What I want from the GCC is [for this organisation] to facilitate the movement for GCC citizens [between member states] without any unnecessary restrictions [i.e., delays at border posts, customs controls, etc.] and the [need for] passports, [...] [what I want from the GCC is] one unified passport, and one flag...". Yet, despite the efforts exerted by the GCC and because of the apprehension shown by member states anxious to safeguard their sovereignty, the relaxation of border controls for GCC citizens remains one of the demands that has been voiced consistently since the inception of the organisation, but which has yet to materialise into a reality (Table 12.5).

### *B. Education & Health Policies:*

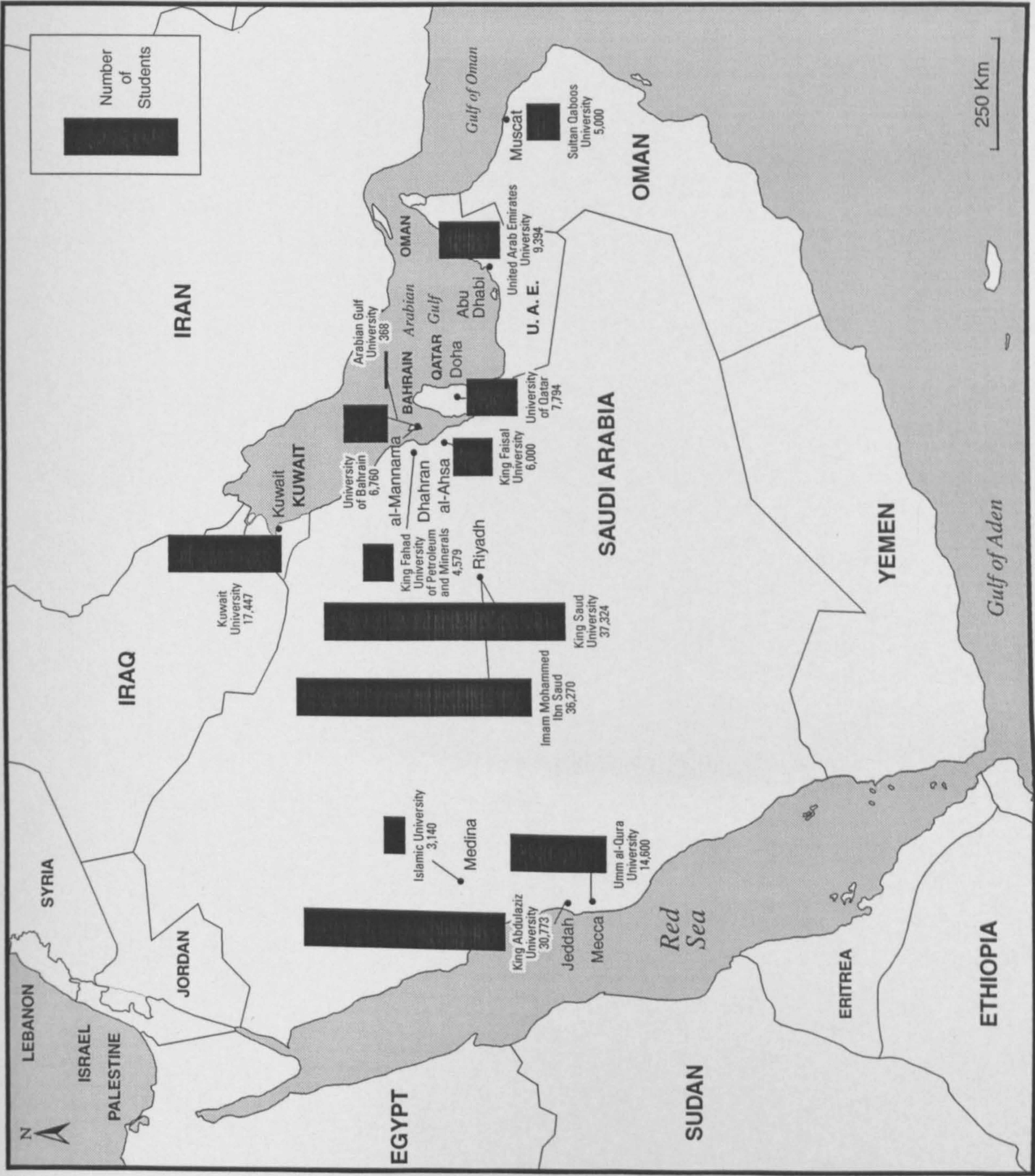
The provision of educational opportunities and the increase in the availability of higher education and of education generally is one of the most important benefits provided by the GCC states to their citizens. The vast oil resources at the disposal of most of the GCC states and the oil boom of the 1970s has allowed the Gulf states to



develop an impressive educational infrastructure and maintain a high level of spending in this area. According to Gause (1993), "it in the areas of education and health that the [GCC] governments' provision of services to citizens through large and elaborate bureaucracies is most evident. [...] The increase in the availability of education at primary - and secondary- school levels over the past twenty-five years in all the [GCC] states is remarkable." (63) Besides providing the educational facilities (schools, colleges, institutes and universities), hiring the teaching personnel, the GCC states actively encourage education through secondary school and provide education through to university level free of charge. The Gulf states' commitment to state education programmes and their investment in education has widened its availability to citizens and allowed the development of an impressive local university infrastructure (see map 12.1). The number of national universities continues to grow and each state pays tuition fees for citizen students and provides grants for those who wish to continue their studies abroad.

Though the education sector in the GCC states has seen an impressive expansion over the last three decades and though government policies in this sector have worked to benefit the majority of the Gulf citizens, certain aspects of the local educational system have been a matter of contention. The governments' role in the state educational system is incontrovertibly pervasive; they not only hire personnel and provide facilities, but also provide and supervise the curriculum taught at all levels of education. The states' strong control over education has been seen by some observers (including academics) as having a damaging effect on the standard of higher education (see the report published in Gulf States Newsletter, 1996, for a discussion of the problems faced in higher education in the Gulf states).





**Map (12.1) The Distribution of Gulf Universities by the Number of Student Enrolment**



The 1985 GCC Sixth Summit agreed on the need for putting in place an educational policy aiming at unifying the different educational systems of the six member states of the organisation. Some of the most notable steps made towards unifying the educational system include: (a) coordination of the qualifications necessary to enter higher education; (b) equal access to basic education to all GCC citizens; (c) the harmonisation of education certificates and degrees issued by institutions within member states; (d) equal access to higher education and equal treatment of GCC students in terms of accommodation, medical care and grants; (e) promotion of joint research and projects between academics; (f) greater interaction in technical and vocational and other educational fields; and (g) organisation of regular conferences and training courses (Abstract of GCC Achievements, 1995: 54-8).

While these initiatives have contributed substantially towards bridging the gap between the various educational systems of the member states, a uniform educational system has yet to materialise owing to a set of limitations, e.g., (a) the implementation of GCC educational policies by member states is still a matter of discretion; (b) universities still adhere to a policy whereby priority in admission is given to nationals; (c) quotas are still imposed by universities on number of students originating from other GCC states.

The right to study in an institution of one's choice in any one GCC member state has been frequently mentioned as important to the general efforts of harmonising the different educational systems of the GCC states. Clearly, the citizen survey provides supportive evidence, with over 90% arguing that there should be no restrictions on students entering any Gulf university (Table 12.5). Cross-boundary movement for educational purposes remains quite limited owing to a set of factors. Only nationals of each member state could benefit from higher education grants and the scholarships offered to students wishing to pursue their higher education in other GCC states are considerably small. Besides, universities in the GCC states would accept only students sponsored by their governments reducing thereby the number of their potential GCC students to minimum



Table 12.5 Citizen Attitudes towards Common Gulf Policies:

Type of Statement	Value Label							
	Yes		No		Maybe		Don't Know	
	Frg	%	Frg	%	Frg	%	Frg	%
Free Movement Without Passport	430	72.9	84	14.2	71	12	4	0.7
Unrestricted entrance to GCC Universities	552	93.6	11	1.9	18	3.1	8	1.4
Equal entitlement to medical care	497	84.2	36	6.1	41	6.9	16	2.7
Need for Common Health/ Education Policies	555	94.1	6	1	24	4.1	4	0.7

Immense oil resources and the oil boom of the 1970s have also allowed the Gulf states to develop an impressive infrastructure in the health care sector. The state has always been and continues to operate as the major provider of health facilities and social welfare programmes. Provision of health services and health programs is a priority for all GCC governments being "cited by government officials as among the most important benefits provided by the regimes to their people" (Gause III, 1993: 65). The last three decades have been a marked decline in infant mortality rates and a marked increase in life expectancy rates. According to Gause III, 'these advances result in large part from commitment by these states to provide health care to their citizens, from the most basic level of services to expensive experimental procedures performed overseas, free of charge.' The late 1980s depression in oil prices, however, marked a decrease in large spending on health care, but it remains "undoubtedly true that all Gulf citizens have access to better, more modern health care than has been the case in the past." (Gause III, 1993: 65).

The GCC's Ninth Summit held in Bahrain decreed that GCC citizens visiting the member states shall be treated the same as the nationals of the host country in benefiting from the services of medical centres and public hospitals starting from March 1989 (see Common Decisions and Decrees, 1993, p. 422 for more details bearing on this policy). Again, most respondents in the survey (84%) agreed with the policy. Yet, as noted previous, such right are by no means automatic for Gulf citizens. Indeed, looking at the GCC decisions over the sixteen years since its first inception, the GCC has yet to develop integrated health and education policies.



### 12.7. Perceptions of the Status of GCC:

On the whole, the achievements to date of the GCC have tended to receive a lukewarm reception among political observers and commentators (e.g., Quassim 1993, al-Rumaihi 1984). In an editorial in the Gulf daily *al-Khaleej*, Hamdan (1992) pointed out that 'when we measure the achievement of the Gulf Cooperation Council....we find ...[that this achievement] is a modest one, [in fact] a very modest one indeed.' In an important discussion of the various challenges which either faced the GCC in the past or which are still facing this organisation today, al-Kuwari (1992) drew attention to the slow progress in the GCC's efforts towards cooperation in this regard that "the GCC has failed to overcome [...] the challenges [foreign labour, population imbalance, border disputes, threats of foreign hegemony; regional threats, loss of Arabo-Islamic identity, lack of democracy] facing each of its member states. Each of these member states stands alone, incapable of facing these challenges on its own. [...] What, then, is the best way to put the GCC train back on its tracks and begin the serious task of building a unified political entity? [...] and what is the best way [to do so, especially] in light of the impotence of each state on its own to face [these] decisive challenges [...]."

While both popular perceptions together with the rationale for its creation highlight the role of the GCC as a force for stability - warding off regional aggression from powerful neighbours, such as Iran and Iraq - there is a question mark over its ability to meet such an objective. In the sample survey most (71%) did agree that the organisation did further the cause of political stability in the region. Yet, the reactions to the claim that "the GCC is unlikely to ever be strong enough militarily to be able to counter regional threats (i.e. threats coming from within the Gulf region)" were more evenly divided. While 38.1% of the total sample disagree with this claim, the 'optimists', nearly as many (33%) were 'pessimists' - concurring with the notion that the GCC was unlikely to ever evolve into a regional grouping militarily capable of withstanding any transgression against the sovereignty of its member states. These results echo the lukewarm reception with which political observers have tended to give the GCC's efforts



to attain greater military cooperation. In spite of some improvements, the security arrangements and military cooperation are not enough to stop any external threat (al-Baharnah, 1994). Thus, while defence and security cooperation “has received more attention from GCC leadership, resulting in the creation of a Desert Shield power [...] the recent expansionist ambitions within the Gulf region [e.g., the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait] have demonstrated that the GCC security arrangements and military cooperation among the GCC member states are not sufficient enough to repel any aggression against one or all such member states” (Al-Baharnah (1994: 41)).

### 12.8 Overview:

Citizen perceptions of the most important policies of the GCC differ from those of the elite. These differences reflect greater citizen scepticism in the extent to which the GCC has been able to meet its objectives, particularly of achieving greater political integration. Equally, these differences also highlight the isolation of the citizens from the decision-making processes of the GCC which continue to be the exclusive preserve of the political elite.

Citizen perceptions of some of the important policies of the GCC showed not only an awareness of the objectives and machinery of the organisation, on the one hand, but a sense of frustration with its lack of achievement to date and with the manner in which it has been pursuing its objectives. These attitudes point to the relative failure of the GCC to deliver on its initial promises of greater cooperation and to achieve popular demands in areas such as the economy, education, environment, health, foreign and internal politics, and immigration.

Simultaneously, there is evidence to suggest that the predispositions exist for a more unified Gulf society. Its achievement means that the GCC should overcome its internal divisions and conflicts which continue to shackle the organisation and which, in turn, continue to hinder each member state from implementing the GCC decisions. In the post-1990 Gulf there is even greater support ‘from below’ for a more effective GCC,



emphasising the need for member states to resolve their internal differences and for the GCC to make its decision-making more transparent.



## **Summary & Conclusion**

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### **13.1 Introduction:**

The main aim of this research has been to explore the social and political basis of cooperation among the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in light of the perceptions and attitudes of two different samples. Such a study fills a gap in the literature, specifically the relationship between attitudinal patterns and the policies of this organisation, on the one hand, and recent developments within the GCC and the Gulf region, on the other. Using both questionnaires and face-to-face interviews as primary methods for eliciting empirical data, the study hoped to redress this gap and arrive at some conclusions.

Discussion in this last chapter falls into six sections. The first reviews the research objectives and the results obtained from an analysis of the data elicited from the main characteristics of the two samples. Subsequently the theoretical framework of the study is summarised. The main findings of the two surveys are highlighted in the following sections, while the last section reviews the study's main limitations and presents some recommendations for future research.

### **13.2 Objectives of this Study:**

This study sought to evaluate the nature, type, level and basis of cooperation among the GCC member states and perceptions and attitudes of these by respondents



in the two contrasting sample surveys. In general, this study pursued answers to the following questions and issues:

- i. What considerations, internal or external factors, do Gulf citizens and GCC officials perceive as having been instrumental to the creation of the GCC?
- ii. How informed are Gulf citizens about the GCC and how extensive is their interest in this organisation?
- iii. What is the nature and seriousness of problems that Gulf citizens and GCC officials perceive as obstructing the progress of the GCC?
- iv. In what areas of cooperation (if any) do Gulf citizens and GCC officials perceive the GCC to have made substantial progress?
- v. What kind of social relations and ties prevails among GCC citizens?

The specific objectives of this research project were:

Objectives of the Study
1. How useful are theories of federalism in understanding the processes of cooperation between GCC member states, including those which continue to provide an obstacle to greater political cooperation between the member states?
2. The structure and policies of the GCC; in particular how certain common policies bearing on foreign affairs, defence/security, health, education, and immigration have been derived and whether they have been implemented?
3. What is the role of such social and political factors as Tribalism and Arab Nationalism in the emergence of the GCC.
4. What is the civil basis of a federal Gulf society.
5. Citizen and political elite attitudes on and perceptions of the formation, nature, and function of the GCC- based on a randomly selected sample from university students as well as a second and equally randomly selected sample of GCC policy-makers.
6. The status of the GCC as a political and economic regional grouping in the changing world order.



### **13.3 Review of the Study's Theoretical Framework:**

In the discussion bearing on federalism in the context of the Arab world, the analysis began by noting the lack of studies that either address or explore the concepts and ideas of federalism in this context and moved on to justify this gap in terms of the virtual absence of federal or confederal associations in the Arab world, the UAE and Yemen being the only exceptions.

Appeal to concepts of federalism, in particular to the process of federalisation was made with an explicit view to understanding and evaluating the presence (or absence) of such process in the case of the GCC. Though the GCC is not itself a federal body, it was argued that many of the factors used to explain the integrative process involved in the emergence of a federation are detectable in the context of the GCC and that such factors persist as the fundamental elements binding the GCC member states. In addition to testing and confirming the validity and usefulness of some theoretical approaches (and inadequacy of others), the discussion of the various aspects of the federalising process in the context of the GCC case examined how this regional grouping came into existence and how far it has progressed in its pursuit of an integrated alliance capable of facing, and successfully resolving, such persistent obstacles as border disputes among some of its member states, politico-economic disagreements and conflicts of economic interests.

The study, in particular, showed the utility of the two theoretical concepts of 'symmetry' and 'asymmetry' in understanding many aspects of the GCC and, especially, the level of harmony (i.e. compatibility) and differences within this regional alliance. It was shown that, in the case of the GCC, pervasive and long-standing societal, religious, linguistic and ethnic affinities account for the symmetrical elements and, in one way or another, the integrative factors in the emergence and persistence of this regional grouping. Besides a common language and a common religion, all GCC



states are royal monarchies and the GCC population is bound by strong ties of blood owing, in part, to the expansion of a few tribes across the GCC states. Two other symmetrical factors binding the GCC states relate to foreign workforce-dependency, on the one hand, and oil dependency, on the other. Each of the GCC states has a rather small native population and has had to rely heavily on a foreign workforce. The magnitude of this foreign workforce is in fact such that it would not be an exaggeration to claim that the native population constitute a minority in each of the GCC states (see chapter 4 for a discussion of this issue). The GCC states are all oil-dependent countries, with oil accounting for their only economic resource and commodity, with the exception of Qatar and Oman, which are also gas-rich countries.

The study showed that there are several other factors, described as asymmetrical elements, which continue to seriously hamper the GCC's progress towards a comprehensive union among its member states. Differences in terms of territorial size, economic power or military capability have, at times, either triggered serious tension in relations between the member states, or strained these relations. The more economically powerful, geographically larger, or militarily stronger states have sought to politically dominate smaller GCC states and affirm their supremacy within the organisation. Member states with larger and more powerful economies (like Saudi Arabia) saw their economic superiority as entitling them to a leadership role within the GCC. Similarly, imbalance in military size and military capability, another element of 'asymmetry' among the GCC countries, has triggered rivalries and hostilities that soured relations within the Council. While some GCC states, such as Saudi Arabia, possess considerable military capability, other states, owing to the very small size of both the country and the native population, are extremely vulnerable militarily. The Iraqi army, for instance, swept through Kuwait within six hours during the 1990 invasion.

The Cold War, originating in irreconcilable ideologies and rivalries between USA and USSR in their pursuit of areas of political influence and leverage, was one



of the hallmarks of the old world order. The impact of the cold war on the politics of the Gulf region and the role such politico-ideological war played in the emergence of the GCC were the focal point of discussion in chapter 5. However, in the new World Order, the GCC's policies have been characterised by a dogged pursuit of potential or immediate self-interests on the part of individual member states, sometimes in total disregard of the nefarious effects this might have on other GCC member states. The conflicts that, from time to time, emerge among the GCC states in their internal and external policies are principally due to the GCC states' prioritisation of national interests to common interests as well as to the persistently unresolved border disputes. In the field of foreign policy, for instance, while some GCC states (e.g., Oman and Qatar) have, in recent years, either opened or resumed diplomatic relations with Israel, other member states are still fundamentally opposed to any form of rapprochement with Israel.

The GCC's policies, during the era of the old world order, were especially oriented towards on the various external threats which the GCC states faced at the time either individually or collectively. Pre-1990 and especially during the old world era, the GCC states faced continued threats from such hostile and more powerful regional neighbours as Iran, Iraq and Israel, as well as from such adversaries outside the Gulf region as the Soviet Union. Post-1990 GCC politics have, however, become somewhat fragmented and less focused, partly as a consequence of the various conflicts of interests and border disputes which persist between the member states of this organisation. Border disputes and 'statism' continue to persist in the post -1990 era as the main two problems straining relations between GCC states and hampering cooperation among them.

The GCC countries must realise that their survival and both internal and external security resides in more cooperation and unity, especially with the continuous persistence of the threat of hostility from Iran and Iraq, the two major powers in the region. The recent Iraqi invasion of Kuwait provides clear evidence of the persistence



of these threats and the instability of the region. The end of the cold war and the collapse of the old USSR resulted in a new world order where the US is the sole superpower. At least for now and in the near future, the interests of the super-power demand that it has to back and protect the GCC member states. It would not be unreasonable to imagine that, at some point in the future, US protection and support will shift to other parties in the region in pursuit of maximum interests, leaving the GCC countries vulnerable and open to threats from old foes and probably even new ones. The GCC states need to understand that regional and international politics are governed by immediate or potential economic interests and that, to that extent, the US would not hesitate to change its policies and loyalties if its interests so dictated. Extensive cooperation and unity is the only way that the GCC could secure and ensure their existence and safety in a troubled region and break out of the cycle of precarious dependency on foreign powers.

Chapter six examined how the role that the tribal organisation of the Gulf society and tribal relations and structures within the Arabian Gulf states has affected the emergence of the GCC. It was shown that strong tribal affinities - assuming the form of a complex network of family and clan ties cutting across the various levels of Gulf society and spanning the whole area known as the GCC - existing among the citizens of the various Gulf states has played a facilitating role in the creation of the GCC. Yet, it was also argued that the impact of tribalism and tribal relations on the political life in the Gulf states has been gradually diminishing on account of the growing gap developing between the political regimes and tribes and tribal structures; the consultative councils established by governments throughout the Gulf states have taken over most of the roles and functions previously in the hands of tribal councils and authorities.

The study examined the relation between the ideology of Pan-Arabism and the creation of the GCC and why such ideology failed to prevent GCC from emerging as a regional alliance of Arab states. The failure of Pan-Arabism to take a strong hold in



Gulf society was argued to be on account of the social conservatism of Gulf society and the revolutionary nature of the nature of the Pan-Arabist ideology. It is also clear that the GCC states often tend to prioritise national sovereignty over the collective concerns of the member states, a tendency which is an important stumbling block to the building of greater cooperation among the countries of the organisation.

#### **13.4. Assessing the GCC: The Survey Analysis:**

The study explored the attitudes of both a political elite sample as well as a student sample towards various aspects of the GCC, including the level and nature of cooperation pursued by the GCC member states. The empirical data on which this study draws was gathered through two surveys, one for each sample. The analysis of the data was carried out in chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of this thesis. The citizens' (represented in this work by students) perceptions and attitudes were analysed in chapters nine, ten, and eleven, whereas those of the political elite were considered in chapter eight. The students' evaluation of cooperation within the GCC was the focus of discussion in chapters eleven and twelve. Chapter ten reported on and evaluated the results of the survey bearing on social relations and issues of identity within the GCC society.

In chapter eight, examination of the reactions of the political elite to the reasons underlying the creation of the GCC showed that their perceptions tally with the reasons widely reported and discussed in the literature discussing the organisation's inception. According to the political elite surveyed in this study, the goals of the GCC rulers themselves were critical to the emergence of the GCC. Other reasons given by the sample were citizen preference, threats originating in the Iran/Iraq war, and threats presented by the Iranian revolution. In regard to the aims of the GCC, the elite sample ranked cooperation in the political field as the most important aim on the GCC agenda. GCC officials claimed that the organisation had so



far realised tangible achievements but that the organisation has been and is still facing many problems. In particular, they perceived such problems as unresolved border disputes and the conflict of political and economic interests as the main obstacles that continue to prevent the GCC from achieving its charter objectives. In respect to the cooperation and coordination of policies, the political elite sample perceived a "significant" level of cooperation among the GCC member states in all fields.

The results of chapter nine revealed that citizens (i.e. students) were informed about and interested in the GCC as an organisation. The students were highly informed as to the nature of the GCC's Charter, and the majority of the sample agreed on what constitutes the main present day concerns of this institution. The students also proved well-informed about 'basic facts' relating to the GCC, the organisation's constituent member states, the year of its establishment and the site of its headquarters. It was found that the student sample's main source of information about the GCC was the regional/local media. Students at a tertiary level institution could be expected to be informed politically; the study also showed that their interest in the GCC extended to a common aspiration that the GCC would lead to some form of political union in the Gulf.

In regard to the GCC's agenda of priorities and aims, nearly 90% of the students thought common defense to be the main priority on the GCC agenda, while more than half considered foreign affairs, health and education policies to be very significant priorities for the GCC. However, only 31.4% listed immigration and immigration policies as one of the main GCC concerns.

Of the 'integrative' conditions leading to the creation of the GCC, analysis of the data obtained from our survey among students revealed two important results. First, Gulf citizens are linked by an extensive network of family and tribal bonds as well as relations of friendship which cut across state boundaries. Such ties should, at least in theory, provide a basis for cross-national ties among the GCC member states,



which the GCC political elite could capitalise on them in their pursuit of extensive cooperation and union among the member states. The research also revealed that the students' loyalty to either their tribes or extended families takes precedence over their loyalties to their countries or the GCC as a union of states.

It was clear from the two samples that there are differing perceptions of the reasons leading to the creation of the GCC. While the political elite sample saw political similarities among the member states as the most important factor in the emergence of the GCC, the student sample argued that societal and cultural similarities among the GCC states the most effective factor.

How the GCC adopts policies is determined by the voting method used within the Council. The students were highly critical of the existing insistence on unanimity, and expressed the belief that it has hindered meaningful and comprehensive cooperation among the states of the GCC. According to a majority of both the students as well as the GCC officials, the system of voting, dependent on unanimity, is undesirable and is primarily responsible for the failure in the implementation of many policies as well as its slow progress.

Though the GCC charter never specified in any explicit terms what form of integration the GCC is pursuing, it has been characterised by many political analysts as a 'confederation'. In any case to date, the GCC might be said to have been a partially successful experiment in regional alliance and integration, if only because it has stopped (for example) the border disputes among some of its member states from developing into major crises. While the emergence of this organisation has not lead to a conclusive resolution of all the border disputes, which have flared on and off for years both prior to and after the creation of the GCC, the GCC has 'contained' the problem, averting major crises which would have plunged what is already a troubled region into more turmoil.



According to many of those (see, among others, al-Rumaihi (1983), al-Nafiasi (1983, 1995), and al-Kuwari (1992)) who have considered the structure of the GCC and its political institutions, the Council remains an elite organisation. It has been argued that though the GCC charter emphasises the importance of unity among its member states, it has not take any critical steps towards this goal and, most importantly, has not seen fit to ensure that the necessary political machinery are in place to achieve either unity or integration. In this connection, the majority of the citizen sample considered that the institutions are incapable of addressing the problems dividing member states and overseeing the implementations of policies bearing on these problems. For the majority of this sample, the resolving of the bilateral conflicts which emerge from time to time between GCC countries is possible only if the Commission for the Settlement of Disputes is transformed into a political body with real power and authority.

One of the criticisms levelled against the GCC in this study is the 'distancing' of its interests and functions from the predominant concerns of the Gulf citizenry. The GCC structure and institutions, it has been argued, continue to mirror the political institutions of the member states in not addressing the real concerns of the citizens. It is only as recently as 1997, during a summit in Kuwait, that the political elite has eventually acceded to the creation of a new consultative body to represent the Gulf people within the Council. These criticisms have been mirrored among the sample surveyed in this study: over half of the citizen sample saw the GCC as a governmental body, run by a very small political elite and operating largely if not entirely independently from the concerns and desires of the majority of citizens, and to that extent no different from any other governmental institution within the member states.

Equally there is considerable awareness, and concern, among both samples about the wrangles within the GCC over the implementation of its policies and resolutions. According to a majority of both samples, some of the economic and political problems that the GCC continues to face are the result of a failure of the



member states to arrive at common agreement. These problems included border disputes, a common defence and uniform foreign policy and (though given less weighting), a uniform and effective immigration policy.

Even among those common policies agreed by the GCC implementation is left to the discretion of the member states. This was one of the important criticisms raised against the GCC, that implementation of policies and compliance with its resolutions on the part of the GCC member states remains fundamentally discretionary. The GCC Charter leaves it open for the member states to choose whether to cooperate, or not, in enforcing the organisation's policies and in complying with its resolutions. Clearly, this will not help the development of the GCC; a commitment to enforce and comply with its policies is a crucial prerequisite not only for closer integration of the economic, cultural and political systems of the member states but for fruitful cooperation among these states as well.

The survey evidence suggests that there is support 'from below' for such cooperation. In their responses to the survey questionnaire, the students affirmed the symmetrical components attested among the GCC societies; 75% of the sample thought that the similarities existing among the GCC citizens far outweigh the differences. More significantly, over 60% considered that the GCC should be aiming towards 'political merger' - towards a more federal - like operation, or at least greater political cooperation. Indeed, no less than 89% of the citizen sample thought that 'the GCC should move much closer than it has so far towards economic and political union', in marked contrast to the 47% who believed that the creation of the GCC had lead to a new era of improved relations among the Gulf states. Both results could be interpreted as affirming dissatisfaction among citizens with the GCC as it exists and with the progress it has made so far in pursuit of its charter aims.

Citizen attitudes towards immigration and the GCC's immigration policies revealed a high level of awareness of the impact and implications that an inordinately



large foreign workforce has had on the economic, political and cultural life of the GCC countries. Over 80% of the total number of students surveyed agreed on the importance of an adequate and effective immigration policy, not only in the context of individual member states but also for the GCC as a regional alliance. Some 44% of the students thought that, so far, cooperation on immigration issues and coordination of immigration policies among the member states has been insufficient. The majority of the student sample saw defense as the area of policy of most critical importance for the states of the GCC. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 1990 and the failure of the GCC states to either prevent it or counter it seems to have reinforced the idea that effective coordination of defense policies has yet to be achieved.

What is also clear is that the GCC has been unable to respond to the demands affecting the daily life worlds of Gulf society. Again the study highlighted the nature of these demands. One of the persistent demands is the need to move freely across GCC borders free of any restrictions, a notion opposed by many of the member states. Others were the right of citizens to study at any GCC university as well as the right of citizens from one GCC country to medical care in any other GCC country. These demands affirm the failure of the GCC to deliver on its promises. While such demands have not been ignored by the GCC in its deliberations, it has not been able to come to their satisfactory resolution. As apparent elsewhere in this study societal factors linking Gulf states are in advance of political arrangements able to reduce cross-national barriers.

### **13.5 The Main Findings of the Study:**

While, in their evaluation of the GCC, the political elite insist that a satisfactory level of cooperation among the member states has been achieved, this was not endorsed by the Gulf citizens, at least as represented here by the sample of university students. Analysis of the empirical results relating to GCC citizens'



perceptions of and attitudes towards the GCC, its policies and its machinery reveal a considerable level of frustration with its political institutions, policies and progress. What clearly emerges from the perceptions and attitudes of the Gulf citizens is that until the GCC decides to meet the demand for some form of public participation in the governing-process through a GCC 'parliament' and similar committees or bodies, the organisation will continue to exist as a political body perceived as remote from the concerns of the Gulf citizenry.

The research has shown that, in the evaluation of some of the most important policies of the GCC, the attitudinal patterns evident among the students sample differed, sometimes widely, from those of the political elite. While the GCC officials insisted, as they have frequently done on Gulf media, that as a regional grouping in pursuit of extensive cooperation in various fields and coordination of various policies, it has realised tangible achievements since its inception some 17 years ago, the students insisted otherwise. Whereas the GCC officials claimed that major progress has been made in all sectors of cooperation, the majority of students were convinced that cooperation remains limited owing to the various problems that continue to strain relations between them. The students' attitudes and criticisms point to the relative failure of the GCC to deliver on its initial promises and to meet the citizen expectations in such areas as foreign and internal policies, education, the economy, immigration, the environment, and health. The general feeling among the student was that for the member states to achieve such cooperation, the GCC needs to overcome the internal conflicts which continue to shackle it, institute political bodies responsive to popular demands, and put in place institutions with the authority and power to enforce the organisation's resolutions and policies.

The general dissatisfaction and sense of frustration voiced by the students, itself is perhaps representative of attitudes amongst the wider Gulf populace, should be seen within its wider context of frustration with the minimal progress in the Arabian Gulf states which have been made towards the establishment of more open



and democratic societies. Whether it is in relation to the GCC or the individual member states (with the exception of Kuwait where measures have recently been undertaken to democratise its institutions), political power has been and remains in the exclusive hands of political elites. The expectations of Gulf citizens will not be fulfilled without their participation in the political process (see also al-Otaby (1990)). The large majority of the students expressed the urgent need for the citizens to be permitted the right to participate in the decision-making process, insisting that the future of GCC and the peoples it brings together should not remain the exclusive concern of the political elite. It seems that, at last, the GCC leadership is heeding some the criticisms that have been levelled against it, for during the GCC summit held between the 19th and 22nd of December, 1997, the member states approved the establishment of a new 'Gulf assembly', in which each of the GCC states will be represented by five members elected from expert and qualified citizens. This thirty member assembly will be able to interact with the GCC Supreme Council. It is to be hoped that this new assembly will not only bring the citizens closer to the decision-making process but, perhaps, most importantly, guide the GCC and its leadership towards the issues and problems that really matter to the citizens of the region.

### **13.6 Limitations of this Study and Recommendations for Further Research:**

Empirically-oriented studies inevitably confront difficulties and, therefore, inevitably have limitations. Several major problems were faced in this research. In term of its methodology, and particularly with relation to the survey of the political elite, the researcher depended on open-ended rather than closed questions as the sample was small and the time to conduct the survey limited. As a consequence of these limitations, usage of statistical analysis in connection with the data obtained from the GCC officials questionnaire was also limited. It is considered that such limitations did not affect the study results in any major manner. As is often the case in Third World countries, major obstacles tend to arise at every turn when trying to



secure official documents or interview government officials. Numerous difficulties were met in the attempt to obtain data bearing on population, immigration, military and security policies. Similarly, where the researcher had hoped to interview the Kuwaiti and Qatari representatives and obtain their attitudes towards the GCC, time limitation and a general reluctance on the part of many officials to be interviewed prevented this from happening.

In spite of these problems, the study has been able to address the research objectives it set out to pursue. Further, the study has raised some important questions and lines of inquiry that could be pursued in future projects. It would be gratifying if this work could provide other researchers some insight into the issues raised here, and help them avoid some of the limitations and difficulties inherent of a research project of this kind. Some of the key questions for future study addressing issues related to the GCC and attitudinal patterns bearing on this organisation: include:

- A similar study to this research to be conducted in Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and UAE among Gulf citizens at large.
- Investigation of the attitudes of civil servants in the member states, mapping of their perceptions of the GCC in general and its effectiveness in different policy fields. The results of such a study could be compared with the findings of the present study so as to determine what similarities (or differences) there are in attitudinal patterns between civil servants and the educated elite.
- Separate and detailed studies are required into the effect of GCC decisions on the constitution of each member state. Mapping the decisions taken by the GCC and studying the reasons and the difficulties precluding the implementation of these decisions would reveal the real causes behind the limited progress attained by the GCC.



- Attitudes towards the new ‘Gulf assembly’ need to be investigated in a separate study to identify what the intellectuals and citizens of the GCC expect from the new institution and to what extent its establishment has helped to modify (if at all) the attitudes of citizens towards the GCC.



**APPENDICES:**

Appendix (A): The Questionnaires

Appendix (B): Data

Appendix (C): Documentation



APPENDIX (A): THE QUESTIONNAIRES

A.1 The Political Elite Questionnaire:

1. Nationality:

BAHRAIN

QATAR

SAUDI ARABIA

KUWAIT

OMAN

U.A.E.

2. Position:

3. Department:

4. Years of Working within GCC Secretariat:

1-4

Over 10

5-9

A. Reasons for the Establishment of the GCC:

1. What Factors do you think were the most important for the creation of the GCC establishment? (Please rank them according to the importance)

A. Regional Factors (i.e. within the Gulf Area):

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

B. International Factors (arising outside the Gulf Area):

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.



**B. Functioning of the GCC :**

1. What do you think are the main aims of the GCC ? (Rank them in order of importance):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

2. What are the main Problems preventing the GCC achieving its aims ? (Please rank them in order of importance):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3. What are the main benefits which have been achieved so far by the GCC ? (Please rank in order of importance):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.



4. Looking at the different policy fields with which the GCC is concerned, do you think that policies of the member states have been devised cooperatively or not ? (Please evaluate them by the rank order in which 10 indicates member states have acted very cooperatively and a common policy has been concluded, 1 indicates the exact opposite)

Little Cooperation	Some Cooperation	Considerable Cooperation
-----------------------	---------------------	-----------------------------

A. Global Perspective:

- |   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1. Common Policies towards US as Superpower ( )           | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Common Policies towards Russia/CIS ( )                 | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. Reaction to Crisis (e.g. Yugoslavia, Somalia. etc.)( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

B. Regional Level:

- |  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| 1. Issues of Internal Security (Military/ Defence) ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. Israeli Question ( )                                | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Iranian threat ( )                                  | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. Iraqi threat before the Gulf War ( )                | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5. Iraqi threat after the Gulf War ( )                 | ( ) | ( ) |
| 6. Yemeni Crisis of 1994 ( )                           | ( ) | ( ) |

C. GCC Level:

- |                                   |     |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|
| 1. Foreign Policies (e.g. EC) ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. Social/ Domestic Policies:     |     |     |
| Health Policies ( )               | ( ) | ( ) |
| Education Policies ( )            | ( ) | ( ) |
| Immigration Policies ( )          | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Economic Policies:             |     |     |
| Common Tariff agreements ( )      | ( ) | ( ) |
| Export Policies ( )               | ( ) | ( ) |
| Import Policies ( )               | ( ) | ( ) |



Little Cooperation	Some Cooperation	Considerable Cooperation
-----------------------	---------------------	-----------------------------

4. Environmental Policies:

Pollution Policies	( )	( )	( )
Marine Pollution	( )	( )	( )

5. What do you think are the four policies which are most important for GCC member states over which a common policy has been devised?

1.
2.
3.
4.

6. How important do you think the following factors were to the creation of the GCC ? (Please rank the following boxes in order of importance from 1-4, 1 indicates most important, 4 indicates least important):

Desire of the GCC Sheikhs

Historical relations

Desire of the GCC citizens

Common Political, Social  
Characteristic

7. How important do you think the following factors were to was the creation of the GCC (Please rank the following box from 1-4 in order of importance, 1 indicates most important, and 4 indicates least important):

Iranian threat

Iraqi threat

Israeli threat

Western Support

Iran-Iraq war threat

USSR threat

Arab Support

Others (Please indicate)



**A.2 The Citizen's Questionnaire:**

Dear Sir / Madam;

This Survey forms an essential part of research I am currently undertaking for the degree of Ph.D. in Geography from Glasgow University, under the support of Qatar University.

The main aim of my study is to examine citizen attitudes towards political cooperation in the Gulf. In particular, this research assumes that there is a political and social basis for greater cooperation between Gulf States that are a support or hinder its progress. Your participation in this questionnaire will help to assess the GCC organisation.

Information obtained by this questionnaire will be treated with **strict confidentiality**.

Thank you in anticipation of your help.

Khalid al-Zamat.

University of Glasgow  
Department of Geography  
Glasgow G12 8QQ



### Knowledge of the GCC:

- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. | 6. |



**Politics of the Gulf :***GCC Establishment: (Reasons for establishment):*

In your view what do you think are the most important reasons which led to the establishment of the GCC: (Rank in order of importance, 1,2,3... etc.):

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| The Iranian Revolution as a threat to the Gulf states  | [ ] |
| Common Social similarities (e.g. Religion and Language)                                      | [ ] |
| Similarities of Political systems(e.g. Sheikhdoms)   | [ ] |
| The common Economic problems of Gulf states (e.g. Oil as the only source for their economy,) | [ ] |
| The Gulf people's demand for the creation of the GCC:  | [ ] |
| The Iran/ Iraq War   | [ ] |

*GCC Function:*

1. Do you think that the function of the GCC should be limited to that of the mutual defence interests of the Gulf states:

- [ ] Yes      [ ] No      [ ] Maybe      [ ] Don't Know

If No:.. What kind of other functions do you think the GCC should have: Please State

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2. Are you personally interested in the problems which encountering the GCC:

- [ ] Yes (Go to the next Question)    [ ] No    [ ] Don't Know

3. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	don't Know
-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------	------------

i. Border Disputes between member states are a major source of conflict:

- [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]

ii. Gulf states Compete with each other for economic growth:

- [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]

iii. GCC Cooperation is likely to be hindered by the different foreign policies of the Gulf states:

- [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]

v. The GCC member states are concerned more about their own individual interests rather than the collective one:

- [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]      [ ]

4. Do you think that the membership of the GCC should be widened to include any other Arab countries:

- [ ] Yes    [ ] No    [ ] Maybe      [ ] Don't Know



5. If Yes: Can you state the other countries that you think they should include in the GCC membership: (Please tick to the country, you would like it to join the GCC)

- ☐ Egypt ☐ Syria ☐ Yemen  
☐ Iraq ☐ Other (Please State it) \_\_\_\_\_

6. According to the GCC Charter (Article 9), the type of voting over substantive matters requires unanimous approval from the member states. Do you agree that the unanimous type of voting should be changed to a majority type one in order to achieve more cooperation?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ Don't Know

7. One of the GCC institution which isn't yet established is the "Commission for the establishment of the Disputes", Do you think that establishment of it will help in solving the border disputes among the member states:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ Don't Know

#### Policy Evaluation:

1. Which of the following co-operative sectors do you consider are the most important: Please Rank them according to the importance: No. 1 as the most important one.

- ☐ Environment ☐ Social ☐ Economic  
☐ Political ☐ Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_.)

2. The following part is seeking opinions on different issues, especially the most important policies from your point of view: (Please indicate how important you think they are):

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Not at all	Don't Know
i. Foreign policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Social policy: especially					
- Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Immigration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Economic Aspects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. Security and Military Aspects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Affinity among the GCC Citizens:

1. Do you have any independent relatives or friends in the other GCC countries:

- ☐ Yes (Go to Question 2, 3 & 4) ☐ No (Go to Question 4)  
☐ Don't Know

2. What type of relations do you have in other GCC countries: (Please fill the table)

Country	Type of Relationship		
	Family	Tribal Relatives	Friend
Bahrain			
Kuwait			
Oman			
Qatar			
Saudi Arabia			
UAE			



3. How many family relatives do you have from the other GCC countries: (Please fill by tick the following table)

Country	No	1-2	3-5	5-10	More than 10
Bahrain			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Kuwait			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Oman			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Qatar			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Saudi Arabia			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
UAE			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

4. Taking the last year which of the following countries have you visited: (Please fill the table)

Country	No. of Times	No. of Visiting to: (Please fill by tick)		Other Reasons for Visit (Please fill by tick)		
		Relatives	Friends	Business	Tourism	Other
Bahrain						
Kuwait						
Oman						
Qatar						
Saudi Arabia						
UAE						
Other Country (Please state _____)						

5. Do you think that tribal relationships are an enhancing factor for the GCC organisation:

[ ] Yes                      [ ] No                      [ ] Maybe                      [ ] Don't Know

#### **Gulf Identity:**

With which of the following do you identify with. Give No. 1 to the most important, then 2, 3,.....etc.):

- [ ] The local area in which you live
- [ ] The tribal group that you belong to
- [ ] Your extended family that you share relations with
- [ ] Your country (Kuwait or Qatar)
- [ ] The GCC countries generally
- [ ] As a member of the Arab nation
- [ ] Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_.)



**Attitude before/ after 1990:**

A. Please indicate how strongly or otherwise you agree / disagree with the following statements:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	don't Know
-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------	------------

1. For Qatar / Kuwait, as small countries, membership of the GCC is essential to meet their defence/ security needs: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
2. There are more similarities than differences amongst the citizens of member states of the GCC: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
3. The long term goal of cooperation between Gulf states should be political union, i.e. one state: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
4. The GCC should proceed much further than it has so far towards economic and political union: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
5. If one of the GCC members is under a major external threat the other members should assist: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
6. Following the Iraq invasion of Kuwait, the GCC adopted a common defence policy to counter the threat: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
7. Being a member of the GCC has become more important following the 1990 war: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
8. Owing to the establishment of the GCC, the relations between member states have improved: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
9. A common GCC set of Immigration policies would strengthen the ability of member states to control the numbers of foreign workers entering the country: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
10. Immigration policy towards the foreign workers is a very important issue not just for separate countries but also for the GCC as a whole:  
☐ Yes ( go to the next Question 11) ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
11. If Yes: Do you think that the GCC is not taking this issue seriously:  
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
12. If No: Why:

B. What would you say to the following statements. Please indicate your opinion:

Yes	No	Maybe	Don't Know
-----	----	-------	------------

- Citizens of GCC countries should be able to move freely between the member states of this organisation (free of passport controls, etc.):



Yes	No	Maybe	Don't Know
-----	----	-------	------------

- [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Students from any of GCC country should be able to attend a university of their choice in any other GCC member state: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
  - GCC citizens should be entitled to the same rights of medical care as the nationals of any one member state: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
  - The GCC should develop more common health/ education policies: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
  - Concerning the security of the Gulf area which become binding on member on member states: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

C. According to latest census the foreign workers were estimated at 9 million in the GCC states. Do you think that the number of foreign workers in your country is:  
 [ ] Too many [ ] A lot but not too many [ ] Not many [ ] Don't Care

### Perceptions of the GCC:

What would you say toward the following statements:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------	------------

1. Do you think that the GCC's existence has hindered the role of the Arab League:  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
2. The GCC is beneficial for the political stability of the member states the of Gulf region : [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
3. When it come to foreign policies it would normally be better for member states to forgo their own interests to the collective interest of the Gulf states:  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
4. The GCC is unlikely to ever be strong enough militarily to be able to counter regional threats (i.e. threats coming from within the Gulf region):  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
5. The GCC is basically a governmental body with little concern with the citizens of member states:  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

### Personal Particulars:

1. Nationality: [ ] Kuwaiti [ ] Qatari  
 [ ] Other GCC citizen(Pleas specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 [ ] Other (Pleas specify) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex: [ ] Male [ ] Female
3. Age Group: [ ] Under 25 [ ] 25 - 30  
 [ ] 30 - 35 [ ] 35 - 40  
 [ ] 45 - 50 [ ] Over 50



**F. Finally:**

Do you have any comments you would like to make on a political & other forms of cooperation amongst Gulf states:

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APPENDIX (B)

Table 8.1 The Internal Factors of underlying the GCC's Creation, by Elite Nationality: (Percentage)

Desire of Rulers:

Nationality	n	*Level of Importance			
		Very Important	Important	Less Important	Least Important
Bahrain	7	42.8	14.4	0	42.8
Oman	3	100	0	0	0
Qatar	2	0	100	0	0
Saudi Arabia	25	52	24	12	12

Desire of Citizens:

Nationality	n	*Level of Importance			
		Very Important	Important	Less Important	Least Important
Bahrain	6	0	16.7	50	33.3
Oman	3	0	33.3	0	66.7
Qatar	2	50	0	0	50
Saudi Arabia	24	8.3	20.9	20.8	37.5

Historical Relations:

Nationality	n	*Level of Importance			
		Very Important	Important	Less Important	Least Important
Bahrain	6	16.7	66.6	16.7	0
Oman	3	0	33.3	33.3	33.3
Qatar	2	0	0	100	0
Saudi Arabia	26	3.8	50	23.1	23.1

Common Political & Social Characteristics:

Nationality	n	*Level of Importance			
		Very Important	Important	Less Important	Least Important
Bahrain	7	42.9	14.2	28.7	14.2
Oman	3	0	33.3	66.6	0
Qatar	2	50	0	0	50
Saudi Arabia	24	50	20.8	16.7	12.7

☆The respondents were asked to rank their Answers 1. Very Important..... 4. Least Important

Table 8.2 The Regional Reasons underlying the creation of the GCC, by Nationality: (Percentage)

*Importance by Category	Iran/ Iraq War				Iranian Threat			
	Bahrain	Oman	Qatar	S.A.	Bahrain	Oman	Qatar	S.A.
Very Important	85.7	66.7	0	86.5	100	100	100	75
Important	14.3	0	50	4.5	0	0	0	12.5
Less Important	0	33.3	0	4.5	0	0	0	0
Least Important	0	0	50	4.5	0	0	0	12.5

*Importance by Category	Iraqi Threat				Israeli Threat			
	Bahrain	Oman	Qatar	S.A.	Bahrain	Oman	Qatar	S.A.
Very Important	20	33.3	100	38	0	50	0	5.3
Important	60	66.7	0	52.4	50	50	100	57.8
Less Important	0	0	0	9.6	50	0	0	26.4
Least Important	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	10.5

*Importance by Category	USSR Threat			
	Bahrain	Oman	Qatar	S.A.
Very Important	0	0	50	14.4
Important	57.1	50	0	28.5
Less Important	28.6	50	50	42.8
Least Important	14.3	0	0	14.3

☆The respondents were asked to rank their Answers 1. Very Important..... 4. Least Important



**Table 8.3 Elite Opinions on the Most Important Problems of the GCC, by Nationality: (Percentage)**

Nationality	n	Type of Problem					
		Border Disputes	No Shared sovereignty	Differences in Internal Policies	Regional Threats & Crisis	Economic Competition	Absence of imposed Decisions
Bahrain	7	10.7	7.1	10.7	0	3.6	14.3
Oman	2	0	28.5	0	14.3	14.3	0
Qatar	2	14.3	0	14.3	0	14.3	14.3
Saudi Arabia	26	9.4	11.5	6.3	8.3	3.1	13.5

Nationality	n	Type of Problem					
		Procedure for adopting a Resolution	Absence of Media	Variation in Perspectives	Customs Tariff	Incompatibility of Interests	Type of voting as unanimous vote
Bahrain	7	0	0	7.1	3.6	14.3	7.1
Oman	2	0	0	14.3	0	14.3	14.3
Qatar	2	0	0	0	14.3	0	14.3
Saudi Arabia	26	6.3	3.1	2.1	1	7.3	10.4

**Table 8.4 External Factors supporting the GCC's Establishment, By Nationality: (Percentage)**

**1. Arab Support:**

Nationality	n	★Level of Importance			
		Very Important	Important	Less Important	Least Important
Bahrain	5	0	0	80	20
Oman	2	50	0	50	0
Qatar	2	0	0	100	0
Saudi Arabia	19	15.8	5.3	42.1	36.8

**2. Western Support:**

Nationality	n	★Level of Importance			
		Very Important	Important	Less important	Least Important
Bahrain	5	20	20	40	20
Oman	2	0	0	50	50
Qatar	2	0	50	50	0
Saudi Arabia	23	13	34.8	43.4	8.8

★The respondents were asked to rank their Answers 1. Very Important..... 4. Least Important



**Table 8.5 Foreign Policy Cooperation, from the GCC elite views, By Nationality:  
(Percentage)**

**(1) Global Relations:**

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>*Level of Cooperation</i>		
		Little Cooperation	Some Cooperation	Considerable Cooperation
Bahrain	7	21.4	28.6	50
Oman	3	0	25	75
Qatar	2	0	15	85
Saudi Arabia	25	4.5	36	59.5

**(2) Regional Level:**

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>*Level of Cooperation</i>		
		Little Cooperation	Some Cooperation	Considerable Cooperation
Bahrain	7	0	50	50
Oman	3	11.1	11.1	77.8
Qatar	2	0	16.7	83.3
Saudi Arabia	25	7.4	37.8	54.8

**(3) GCC level:**

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>*Level of Cooperation</i>		
		Little Cooperation	Some Cooperation	Considerable Cooperation
Bahrain	7	0	28.6	71.4
Oman	3	0	33.3	66.7
Qatar	2	0	0	100
Saudi Arabia	25	4	32	64



## **APPENDIX (C)**

### **DOCUMENTATION:**

#### **I. GCC CHARTER:**

Cooperation Council For The Arab States of The Gulf

The United Arab Emirates  
The State of Bahrain  
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
The Sultanate of Oman  
The State of Qatar and  
The State of Kuwait

Being fully aware of the ties of special relations, common characteristics and similar systems founded on the Creed of Islam which bind them; and Believing in the common destiny and the unity of aim which link their peoples; and

In view of their desire to effect coordination, integration and interconnection between them in all fields; and Having the conviction that coordination, cooperation, and integration between them serve the sublime objectives of the Arab Nation; and, In pursuit of the goal of strengthening cooperation and reinforcement of the links between them; and

In an endeavor to complement efforts already begun in all essential areas that concern their peoples and realize their hopes for a better future on the path to unity of their States; and In conformity with the Charter of the League of Arab States which calls for the realization of closer relations and stronger bonds; and

In order to channel their efforts to reinforce and serve Arab and Islamic causes, Have agreed as follows:

#### **(Article One)**

##### **The Establishment of the Council:**

A Council shall be established hereby to be named The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf hereinafter referred to as the Cooperation Council (G.C.C.).

#### **(Article Two)**

##### **Headquarters:**

The Cooperation Council shall have its headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



**(Article Three)****Cooperation Council Meetings:**

The Council shall hold its meetings in the state where it has its headquarters, and may convene in any member state.

**(Article Four)****Objectives:**

The basic Objectives of the Cooperation Council are:

1. To effect coordination, integration and inter-connection between Member States in all fields in order to achieve unity between them.
2. To deepen and strengthen relations, links and areas of cooperation now prevailing between their peoples in various fields.
3. To formulate similar regulations in various fields including the following:
  - a. Economic and financial affairs
  - b. Commerce, customs and communications
  - c. Education and culture
  - d. Social and health affairs
  - e. Information and tourism
  - f. Legislative and administrative affairs.
4. To stimulate scientific and technological progress in the fields of industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources; to establish scientific research; to establish joint ventures and encourage cooperation by the private sector for the good of their peoples.

**(Article Five)****Council Membership:**

The Cooperation Council shall be formed of the six states that participated in the Foreign Ministers' meeting held at Riyadh on 4 February 1981.

**(Article Six)****Organizations of the Cooperation Council**

The Cooperation Council shall have the following main organisations:

1. The Supreme Council to which shall be attached the Commission for Settlement of Disputes.
2. The Ministerial Council.
3. The Secretariat-General.

Each of these organisations may establish sub-agencies as may be necessary.



**(Article Seven)****Supreme Council:**

1. The Supreme Council is the highest authority of the Cooperation Council and shall be formed of heads of member states. Its presidency shall be rotatory based on the Alphabetical order of the names of the member states.
2. The Supreme Council shall hold one regular session every year. Extraordinary sessions may be convened at the request of any member seconded by another member.
3. The Supreme Council shall hold its sessions in the territories of member states.
4. A Supreme Council's meeting shall be considered valid if attended by two-thirds of the member states.

**(Article Eight)****The Functions of the Supreme Council:**

The Supreme Council shall endeavour to realize the objectives of the Cooperation Council, particularly as concerns the following:

1. Review matters of interest to the member states.
2. Lay down the higher policy for the Cooperation Council and the basic lines it should follow.
3. Review the recommendations, reports, studies and joint ventures submitted by the Ministerial Council for approval.
4. Review reports and studies which the Secretary-General is charged to prepare.
5. Approve the bases for dealing with other states and international organisations.
6. Approve the rules of procedure of the Commission for the Settlement of Disputes and nominate its members.
7. Appoint the Secretary-General.
8. Amend the Charter of the Cooperation Council.
9. Approve the Council's internal rules of procedure.
10. Approve the budget of the Secretariat-General.

**(Article Nine)****Voting In the Supreme Council:**

1. Each member of the Supreme Council shall have one vote.
2. Resolutions of the Supreme Council in substantive matters shall be carried by unanimous approval of the member states participating in the voting, while resolutions on procedural matters shall be carried by majority vote.

**(Article Ten)****Commission for the Settlement of Disputes:**

1. The Cooperation Council shall have a commission called "The Commission for the Settlement of Disputes" which shall be attached to the Supreme Council.



2. The Supreme Council shall establish the composition of the Commission for every case on an "ad hoc" basis in accordance with the nature of the dispute.
3. If a dispute arises over interpretation or implementation of the Charter and such dispute is not resolved within the Ministerial Council or the Supreme Council, the Supreme Council may refer such dispute to the Commission for the Settlement of Disputes.
4. The Commission shall submit its recommendations or opinion, as applicable, to the Supreme Council for such action as the Supreme Council deems appropriate.

### **(Article Eleven)**

#### **Ministerial Council:**

1. The Ministerial Council shall be formed of the Foreign Ministers of the member states or other delegated Ministers. The Council presidency shall be for the member state which presided the last ordinary session of the Supreme Council, or if necessary for the state which is next to preside the Supreme Council.
2. The Ministerial Council shall convene every three months and may hold extraordinary sessions at the invitation of any member seconded by another member.
3. The Ministerial Council shall determine the venue of its next session.
4. A Council's meeting shall be deemed valid if attended by two-thirds of the member states.

### **(Article Twelve)**

#### **Functions of the Ministerial Council:**

1. Propose policies, prepare recommendations, studies and projects aimed at developing cooperation and coordination between member states in various fields and adopt the resolutions or recommendations required in this regard.
2. Endeavour to encourage, develop and coordinate activities existing between member states in all fields. Resolutions adopted in such matters shall be referred to the Ministerial Council for further submission, with recommendations, to the Supreme Council for appropriate action.
3. Submit recommendations to the Ministers concerned to formulate policies whereby the Cooperation Council's resolutions may be put into effect.
4. Encourage means of cooperation and coordination between the various private sector activities, develop existing cooperation between the member states' Chamber of Commerce and industry, and encourage the movement within the G.C.C. of workers who are citizens of the member states.
5. Refer any of the various aspects of cooperation to one or more technical or specialised committee for study and presentation of appropriate recommendations.
6. Review proposals related to amendments to this Charter and submit appropriate recommendations to the Supreme Council.
7. Approve Rules of Procedure of both the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat-General.
8. Appoint the Assistant Secretaries-General, as nominated by the Secretary-General, for a period of three years, renewable.



9. Approve periodic reports as well as internal rules and regulations relating to administrative and financial affairs proposed by the Secretary-General, and submit recommendations to the Supreme Council for approval of the budget of the Secretariat-General.
10. Make arrangements for meetings of the Supreme Council and prepare its agenda.
11. Review matters referred to it by the Supreme Council.

### **(Article Thirteen)**

#### **Voting in the Ministerial Council:**

1. Every member of the Ministerial Council shall have one vote.
2. Resolutions of the Ministerial Council in substantive matters shall be carried by unanimous vote of the member states present and participating in the vote, and in procedural matters by majority vote.

### **(Article Fourteen)**

#### **The Secretariat-General:**

1. The Secretariat-General shall be composed of a Secretary-General who shall be assisted by assistants and a number of staff as required.
2. The Supreme Council shall appoint the Secretary-General, who shall be a citizen of one of the Cooperation Council states, for a period of three years which may be renewed once only.
3. The Secretary-General shall nominate the Assistant Secretaries-General.
4. The Secretary-General shall appoint the Secretariat-General's staff from among the citizens of member states, and may not make exceptions without the approval of the Ministerial Council.
5. The Secretary-General shall be directly responsible for the work of the Secretariat-General and the smooth flow of work in its various organisations. He shall represent the Cooperation Council with other parties within the limits of the authority vested in him.

### **(Article Fifteen)**

#### **Functions of the Secretariat-General:**

The Secretariat-General shall:

1. Prepare studies related to cooperation and coordination, and to integrated plans and programmes for member states' action.
2. Prepare periodic reports on the work of the Cooperation Council.
3. Follow up the implementation by the member states of the resolutions and recommendations of the Supreme Council and Ministerial Council.
4. Prepare reports and studies requested by the Supreme Council or Ministerial Council.
5. Prepare the draft of administrative and financial regulations commensurate with the growth of the Cooperation Council and its expanding responsibilities.
6. Prepare the budgets and closing accounts of the Cooperation Council.
7. Make preparations for meetings and prepare agendas and draft resolutions for the Ministerial Council.



- S. Recommend to the Chairman of the Ministerial Council the convening of an extraordinary session of the Council when necessary.
9. Any other tasks entrusted to it by the Supreme Council or Ministerial Council.

### **(Article Sixteen)**

The Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretaries-General and all the Secretariat-General's staff shall carry out their duties in complete independence and for the joint benefit of the member states. They shall refrain from any action or behaviour that is incompatible with their duties and from divulging confidential matters relating to their appointments either during or after their tenure of office.

### **(Article Seventeen)**

#### **Privileges and Immunities:**

1. The Cooperation Council and its organisations shall enjoy on the territories of all member states such legal competence, privileges and immunities as are required to realize their objectives and carry out their functions.
2. Representatives of the member states on the Council, and the Council's employees, shall enjoy such privileges and immunities as are specified in agreements to be concluded for this purpose between the member states. A special agreement shall organize the relation between the Council and the state in which it has its headquarters.
3. Until such time as the two agreements mentioned in item 2 above are prepared and put into effect, the representatives of the member states in the Cooperation Council and its staff shall enjoy the diplomatic privileges and immunities established for similar organisations.

### **(Article Eighteen)**

#### **Budget of the Secretariat-General:**

The Secretariat-General shall have a budget to which the member states shall contribute in equal amounts.

### **(Article Nineteen)**

#### **The Implementation of the Charter:**

1. This Charter shall go into effect as of the date it is signed by the Heads of States of the six member states named in this Charter's preamble.
2. The original copy of this Charter shall be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which shall act as custodian and shall deliver a true copy thereof to every member state, pending the establishment of the Secretariat-General, at which time the latter shall become depository.



**(Article Twenty)****Amendments to the Charter:**

1. Any member state may request an amendment of this Charter.
2. Request for Charter amendments shall be submitted to the Secretary-General who shall refer them to the member states at least four months prior to submission to the Ministerial Council.
3. An amendment shall become effective if unanimously approved by the Supreme Council.

**(Article Twenty-one)****Closing Provisions**

No reservations may be voiced in respect of the provisions of this Charter.

**(Article Twenty-two)**

The Secretariat-General shall arrange to deposit and register copies of this Charter with the League of Arab States and the United Nations, by resolution of the Ministerial Council.

This Charter is signed on one copy in the Arabic language at Abu Dhabi City, United Arab Emirates, on 21 Rajab 1401 corresponding to 25 May 1981.

The United Arab Emirates

The State of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Sultanate of Oman

The State of Qatar

The State of Kuwait

**Rules of Procedure of the Supreme Council:****(Article One)****Definitions:**

These regulations shall be called Rules of Procedure of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council and shall encompass the rules that govern procedures for convening the Council and the exercise of its functions.

**(Article Two)****Membership:**

1. The Supreme Council shall be composed of the Heads of State of the member states of the Cooperation Council. The Presidency shall rotate on the basis of the alphabetical order of the names of the member states.



2. Each member state shall notify the Secretary-General of the names of the members of its delegation to the Council meeting, at least seven days prior to the date set for opening the meeting.

### **(Article Three)**

With due regard to the objectives of the Cooperation Council and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Council as specified in Articles 4 and 8 of the Charter, the Supreme Council may:

1. Form technical committees and select their members from member states' nominees who specialize in the committees' respective fields.
2. Call upon one or more of its members to study a specific subject and submit a report thereon to be distributed to the members sufficiently in advance of the meeting arranged to discuss that subject.

### **(Article Four)**

#### **Convening the Supreme Council:**

1. a. The Supreme Council shall hold one regular session every year, and may hold extraordinary sessions at the request of any one member seconded by another member.  
b. The Supreme Council shall hold its sessions at the level of Heads of State.  
c. The Supreme Council shall hold its sessions in the member states' territories.  
d. Prior to convening the Supreme Council, the Secretary-General shall hold a meeting to be attended by delegates of the member states for consultation on matters related to the agenda of the said meeting.
2. a. The Secretary-General shall set the opening date of the Council's session and suggest a closing date.  
b. The Secretary-General shall issue the invitations for convening a regular session no less than thirty days in advance, and for convening an extraordinary session, within no more than five days.

### **(Article Five)**

1. The Supreme Council shall at the start of every session decide whether the meetings shall be in closed or open session.
2. A meeting shall be considered valid if attended by the Heads of State of two-thirds of the member states. Its resolutions in substantive matters shall be carried by unanimous agreement of the member states present and participating in the vote, while resolutions in procedural matters shall be carried by majority vote. Any member abstaining shall record that he is not bound by the resolution.

### **(Article Six)**

1. The Council shall hold an extraordinary session in the event of:
  - a. A resolution passed in a previous session.
  - b. A request by a member state seconded by another state. In this case, the Council shall convene within no more than five days from the date of issue of the invitation for holding the extraordinary session.



2. The draft agenda shall include the following:
  - a. A report by the Secretary-General on the activities of the Supreme Council between the two sessions, and actions taken to carry out its resolutions.
  - b. Reports and matters received from the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat-General.
  - c. Matters which the Supreme Council had previously decided to include on the agenda.
  - d. Matters suggested by a member state as being in need of review by the Supreme Council.
3. Every member state may request inclusion of additional items on the draft agenda provided such request is tabled at least fifteen days prior to the date set for opening the session. Such matters shall be listed in an additional agenda which shall be sent, along with relevant documentation, to the member states, at least five days before the date set for the session.
4. Any member state may request inclusion of extra items on the draft agenda as late as the date set for opening a session, if such matters are considered both important and urgent.
5. The Council shall approve its agenda at the start of every session.
6. The Council may, during the session, add new items that are considered urgent.
7. The ordinary session shall be adjourned after completion of discussions of the items placed on the agenda. The Supreme Council may decide to suspend the session's meetings before completion of discussions on agenda items, and resume such meetings at a later date.

### **(Article Nine)**

#### **Office and Committees of the Supreme Council:**

1. The Supreme Council Office shall comprise, in every session, the Council President, the Chairman of the Ministerial Council and the Secretary-General. The Office shall be headed by the Supreme Council President.
2. The Office shall carry out the following functions:
  - a. Review the form of resolutions passed by the Supreme Council without affecting their contents.
  - b. Assist the President of the Supreme Council in directing the activities of the session in general.
  - c. Other tasks indicated in these Rules of Procedure or other matters entrusted to it by the Supreme Council.

### **(Article Ten)**

1. The Council may, at the start of every session, create any committees that it deems necessary to allow adequate study of matters listed on the agenda. Delegates of member states shall take part in the activities of such committees.
2. Meetings of committees shall continue until they complete their tasks, with due regard for the date set for closing the session. Their resolutions shall be carried by majority vote.
3. Every committee shall start its work by selecting a chairman and a reporter from among its members. The reporter of the committee shall act for the chairman in



directing the meeting in the absence of the chairman. The chairman, or the reporter in the chairman's absence, shall submit to the Council all explanations that it requests on the committee's reports. The chairman may, with the approval of the session's President, take part in the discussions, without voting, so long as he is not a member of the Supreme Council.

4. The Council may refer any of the matters included in the agenda to the committees, based on their specialisation for study and reporting. Any one item may be referred to more than one committee.
5. Committee may neither discuss any matter not referred to them by the Council, nor adopt any recommendation which, if approved by the Council, may entail a financial obligation, before the committee receives a report from the Secretary General regarding the financial and administrative results that may ensue from adopting the resolution.

### (Article Eleven)

#### **The Process of Deliberation and Putting Forward Proposals:**

1. Every member state may participate in the deliberation of the Supreme Council and its committees in the manner provided for in these Rules of Procedure.
2. The president shall direct discussion of the items as presented in order on the agenda of the meeting and may, when necessary, call upon the Secretary-General or his representative in the meeting to provide such clarification as he sees fit.
3. The President shall give the floor to speakers in the order of their requests. He may give priority to the chairman or reporter of a committee to submit a report or explain specific points.
4. Every member may, during deliberations, raise points of order on which the President shall pronounce immediately and his decisions shall have effect unless voted by a majority of the Supreme Council member states.

### (Article Twelve)

1. Every member may, during the discussion of any subject, request suspension or adjournment of the meeting or discussion of the subject. or closure. Such requests may not be discussed but the President shall put them to the vote, if duly seconded, and decision shall be by majority of the member states.
2. With due regard to provisions of item 4 of the preceding Article, suggestions indicated in item 1 of this Article shall be given priority over all others based on the following order:
  - a- Suspension of the meeting
  - b- Adjournment of the meeting
  - c- Postponement of discussion of the matter in hand.
  - d- Closure of discussion of the matter in hand.
3. Apart from suggestions on formulation or procedural matters draft resolutions and substantive amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General or his representative who shall distribute them as soon as possible to the delegations. No draft resolution may be submitted for discussion or voting before the text thereof is distributed to all the delegations.



4. A proposal on which a decision has been taken may not be reconsidered in the same session unless the Council decides otherwise.

### **(Article Thirteen)**

The President shall follow up on the activities of the committees, inform the Supreme Council of correspondence received, and formally announce before members all the resolutions and recommendations arrived at.

### **(Article Fourteen)**

#### **Voting:**

Every member state shall have one vote and no state may represent another state or vote on its behalf.

### **(Article Fifteen)**

1. Voting shall be by calling the names in the alphabetical order of the states' names, or by raising hands. Voting shall be secret if so requested by a member or by decision of the President.  
The Supreme Council may decide otherwise. The vote of every member shall be documented in the minutes of the meeting if voting is effected by calling the names. The minutes shall indicate the result of voting, if the vote is secret or by show of hands.
2. A member may abstain from a vote or express reservations over a procedural matter or part thereof, in which case the reservation shall be read at the time the resolution is announced and shall be duly documented in writing. Members may present explanations about their stand in the voting after voting is completed.
3. Once the President announces that voting has started, no interruption may be made unless the matter relates to a point of order relevant to the vote.

### **(Article Sixteen)**

1. If a member request amendment of a proposal, voting on the amendment shall be carried out first. If there is more than one amendment, voting shall first be made on the amendment which in the President's opinion is farthest from the original proposal, then on the next farthest, and so on until voting is completed on all proposed amendments. If one or more such amendments is passed, then voting shall be made on the original proposal as amended.
2. Any new proposal shall be deemed to be an amendment to the original proposal if it merely entails an addition to, omission or change to a part of the original proposal.

### **(Article Seventeen)**

1. The Supreme Council may create technical committees charged with giving advice on the design and implementation of Supreme Council programmes in specific fields.
2. The Supreme Council shall appoint the members of the technical committees from specialists who are citizens of the member states.



3. The technical committees shall meet at the invitation of the Secretary-General and shall draw up their work plans in consultation with him.
4. The Secretary-General shall prepare the agenda of the committees after consultation with the chairman of the committee concerned.

### (Article Eighteen)

#### **Amendment of the Rules of Procedure:**

1. Any member state may propose amendments to the Rules of Procedure.
2. No proposed amendments may be considered unless the relevant proposal has been circulated to the member states by the Secretariat-General at least thirty days prior to submission to the Ministerial Council.
3. No basic changes may be introduced to the proposed amendment mentioned in the preceding paragraph unless the text of such proposed changes has been circulated to the member states by the Secretariat-General at least fifteen days before submission to the Ministerial Council.
4. Except for items based on the provisions of the Charter, and with due regard to the provisions of preceding paragraphs these Rules of procedure shall be amended by a resolution of the Supreme Council approved by a majority of the members.

### (Article Nineteen)

#### **Effective Date:**

These Rules of Procedure shall go into effect as of the date of approval by the Supreme Council and may not be amended except in accordance with procedures set forth in the preceding Article.

These Rules of Procedure are signed at Abu Dhabi City, United Arab Emirates on 21 Rajab 1401 AH Corresponding to 25 May 1981 AD.

The United Arab Emirates

The State of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Sultanate of Oman

The State of Qatar

The State of Kuwait

#### **Rules of Procedure of the Ministerial Council:**

### (Article One)

1. These regulations shall be called Rules of Procedure of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council and shall encompass rules governing meetings of the Council and the exercise of its functions.
2. The following terms as used herein shall have the meanings indicated opposite each:

Cooperation Council: The Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council

Charter: Statute establishing the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council



Supreme Council:	The highest body of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council
Council:	Ministerial Council of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council
Secretary-General:	The Secretary-General of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council
Chairman:	The Chairman of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council

### **(Article Two)**

#### **States Representation:**

1. The Ministerial Council shall be composed of the member states' Foreign Ministers or other delegated Ministers.
2. Every member state shall, at least one week prior to the convening of every ordinary session of the Ministerial Council convey to the Secretary-General a list of the name of the members of its delegation. For extraordinary sessions, the list shall be submitted three days before the date set for the session.

### **(Article Three)**

#### **Convening the Sessions:**

1. The Ministerial Council shall decide in every meeting the venue of its next regular session.
2. The Secretary-General shall decide, in consultation with the member states, the venues of extraordinary sessions.
3. If circumstances should arise that preclude the convening of an ordinary or extraordinary session at the place set for it, the Secretary-General shall so inform the member states and shall set another place for the meeting after consultation with them.

### **(Article Four)**

#### **Ordinary Sessions:**

1. The Council shall convene in ordinary session once every three months.
2. The Secretary-General shall set the date for opening the session and suggest the date of its closing.
3. The Secretary-General shall address the invitation to attend a Council ordinary session at least fifteen days in advance, and shall indicate therein the date and place set for the meeting, as well as attaching thereto the agenda of the session, explanatory notes and other documentation.

### **(Article Five)**

#### **Extraordinary Sessions:**

1. The Council shall hold an extraordinary session at the request of any member state seconded by another member.



2. The Secretary-General shall address the invitation to the Council's extraordinary session and attach a memorandum containing the request of the member state which has requested the meeting.
3. The Secretary-General shall specify in the invitation the place, date and agenda of the session.

#### **(Article Six)**

1. The Council may itself decide to hold extraordinary sessions, in which case it shall specify the agenda, time and place of the session.
2. The Secretary-General shall send out to the member states the invitation to attend the extraordinary meeting of the Council along with a memorandum containing the resolution of the Council to this effect, and specifying the date and agenda of the session.
3. The extraordinary session shall be convened within a maximum of five days from the date of issue of the invitation.

#### **(Article Seven)**

No matters, other than those for which the extraordinary session was called, may be included on its agenda.

#### **(Article Eight)**

##### **Agenda:**

The Secretary-General shall prepare a draft agenda for a Council's ordinary session and such draft shall include the following:

1. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Cooperation Council.
2. Matters referred to him by the Supreme Council.
3. Matters which the Council had previously decided to include on the agenda.
4. Matters which the Secretary-General believes should be reviewed by the Council.
5. Matters suggested by a member state.

#### **(Article Nine)**

Member states shall convey to the Secretary-General their suggestions on matters they wish to include on the Council's agenda at least thirty days prior to the date of the Council's ordinary session.

#### **(Article Ten)**

Member states or the Secretary-General may request the inclusion of additional items on the Council's draft agenda at least ten days prior to the date set for opening an ordinary session. Such items shall be listed on an additional schedule which shall be conveyed along with relevant documentation to the member states at least five days prior to the date of the session.



**(Article Eleven)**

Member states or the Secretary-General may request inclusion of additional items on the agenda for the Council's ordinary session up to the date set for opening the session if such matters are both important and urgent.

**(Article Twelve)**

The Council shall approve its agenda at the beginning of every session.

**(Article Thirteen)**

A Council's ordinary session shall end upon completion of discussion of matters listed on the agenda. The Council may, when necessary, decide to suspend its meetings temporarily before discussion of agenda items is completed and resume its meetings at a later date.

**(Article Fourteen)**

The Council may defer discussion of certain items on its agenda and decide to include them with the others, when necessary, on the agenda of a subsequent session.

**(Article Fifteen)****Chairmanship of the Council:**

1. Chairmanship of the Council shall be entrusted to the member state which presided the last ordinary session of the Supreme Council, or, if necessary, to the state which is next to preside the Supreme Council.
2. The Chairman shall exercise his functions until he passes his post on to his successor.
3. The Chairman shall also preside over extraordinary sessions.
4. The representative of a state that is party to an outstanding dispute may not chair the session or meeting assigned for discussing such dispute, in which case the Council shall name a temporary Chairman.

**(Article Sixteen)**

1. The Chairman shall announce the opening and closing of sessions and meetings, the suspension of meetings and closure of discussions, and shall ensure respect for the provisions of the Charter and these Rules of Procedure.
2. The Chairman may participate in the Council's deliberations and vote in the name of the state he represents. He may, for such purpose, delegate another member of his delegation to act on his behalf.



**(Article Seventeen)****Office of the Council:**

1. The Office of the Council shall include the Chairman, Secretary-General, and heads of working sub-committees which the Council has resolved to set up.
2. The Chairman of the Council shall preside over the Office.

**(Article Eighteen)**

The Office shall carry out the following tasks:

1. Assist the Chairman to direct the proceedings of the Session.
2. Coordinate the work of the Council and the sub-committees.
3. Supervise the drafting of the resolutions passed by the Council.
4. Other tasks indicated in these Rules of Procedure or entrusted to it by the Council.

**(Article Nineteen)****Sub-committees:**

1. The Council shall call upon preparatory and working committees to assist in accomplishing its tasks.
2. The Secretariat-General shall participate in the work of the committees.

**(Article Twenty)**

1. The Secretary-General may, in consultation with the Chairman of the session, form preparatory committees charged with the study of matters listed on the agenda.
2. Preparatory committees shall be composed of delegates of member states and may, when necessary, seek the help of such experts as they may deem appropriate.
3. Each preparatory committee shall meet at least three days prior to the opening of the session by invitation of the Secretary-General. The work of the committee shall end at the close of the session.

**(Article Twenty-one)**

1. The Council may, at the start of each session, form working committees and charge them with specific tasks.
2. The work of the working committees shall continue until the date set for closing the session.

**(Article Twenty-Two)**

1. Each sub-committee shall start its work by electing a chairman and a reporter from among its members. When the chairman is absent, the reporter shall act for him in directing the meetings.
2. The chairman or reporter of each sub-committee shall submit a report on its work to the Council.



3. The chairman or reporter of a sub-committee shall present to the Council all explanations required regarding the contents of the sub-committees report.

**(Article Twenty-three)**

1. The Secretariat-General shall organize the technical secretariat and sub-committees of the Council.
2. The Secretariat-General shall prepare minutes of meetings documenting discussions, resolutions and recommendations. Such minutes shall be prepared for all meetings of the Council and its sub-committees.
3. The Secretary-General shall supervise the organization of the Council's relations with the information media.
4. The Secretary-General shall convey the Council's resolutions and recommendations and relevant documentation to the member states within fifteen days after the end of the session.

**(Article Twenty-four)**

The Council's secretariat and sub-committees shall receive and distribute documents, reports, resolutions and recommendations of the Council and its sub-committees and shall draw up and distribute minutes and daily bulletins in addition to safeguarding documents and performing other tasks required by the Council's work.

**(Article Twenty-five)**

Texts of resolutions or recommendations made by the Council may not be announced or published except by resolution of the Council.

**(Article Twenty-six)**

**Deliberations:**

Every member state may take part in the deliberations of the Council and its sub-committees in the manner prescribed in these Rules of Procedure.

**(Article Twenty-seven)**

1. The Chairman shall direct deliberations on matters on hand in the order they are listed on the Council's agenda.
2. The Chairman shall give the floor to speakers in the order of their requests. Priority may be given to the chairman or reporter of a particular committee to present its report or explain certain points therein. The floor shall be given to the Secretary-General or his representative whenever it is necessary.
3. The Council Chairman may, during deliberations, read the list of the names or members who have requested the floor, and with the approval of the Council, close the list. The only exception is exercise of the right of reply.



**(Article Twenty-eight)**

The Council shall decide whether the meetings shall be held in open or closed session.

**(Article twenty-nine)**

1. Every member state may raise a point of order, on which the chairman shall pronounce immediately and his decision shall take effect unless vetoed by a majority of the member states.
2. A member who raises point of order may not go beyond the point he has raised.

**(Article Thirty)**

1. Every member may, during discussion of any matter, propose the suspension or adjournment of the meeting, or discussion of the matter on hand, or closure. The Chairman shall in such cases put the proposal to the vote directly, if the proposal is seconded by another member. Such proposal requires the approval of the majority of the member states to pass.
2. With due regard to the provisions of the preceding paragraph proposals indicated therein shall be submitted to the vote in the following order:
  - a. Suspension of meeting
  - b. Adjournment of meeting
  - c. Postponement of discussion of the matter in hand
  - d. Closure of discussion of the matter in hand

**(Article Thirty-one)**

1. Member States may suggest draft resolutions or recommendations, or amendments thereto, and may withdraw all such unless they are voted upon.
2. Drafts indicated in the preceding item shall be submitted in writing to the Secretariat-General for distribution to delegations as soon as possible.
3. Except for proposals concerning formulation or procedures, drafts indicated in this Article may not be discussed or voted upon before their texts are distributed to all delegations.
4. A proposal already decided upon may not be reconsidered in the same session. unless the Council decides otherwise.

**(Article Thirty-two)**

The Chairman shall follow up the work of the committees, inform the Council of incoming correspondence, and formally announce before members the resolutions and recommendations arrived at.

**(Article Thirty-three)****Voting:**

1. The Council shall pass its resolutions with the unanimous approval of the member states present and participating in the vote, while decisions in procedural matters shall



be passed by a majority vote. Any member abstaining from voting shall record the fact that he is not bound by the vote.

2. If members of the Council should disagree on the definition of the matter being put to the vote, the matter shall be settled by majority vote of the member states present.

#### **(Article Thirty-four)**

1. Every member state shall have one vote.
2. No member state may represent another state or vote on its behalf.

#### **(Article Thirty-five)**

1. Voting shall be by the names in the alphabetical order of the states' names, or by show of hands.
2. Voting shall be by secret ballot if so requested by a member or by decision of the Chairman. The Council, however, may decide otherwise.
3. The vote of every member shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting if voting is by calling the names. The minutes shall indicate the result of voting if the vote is secret or by show of hands.
4. Member states may explain their positions after the vote and such explanations shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
5. Once the Chairman announces that voting has started, no interruption may be made except for a point of order relating to the vote or its postponement in accordance with the provisions of this Article and the next.

#### **(Article Thirty-six)**

1. The Council Chairman with the help of the Secretary-General shall endeavour to reconcile the positions of member states on disputed matters and obtain their agreement to a draft resolution before submitting it to the vote.
2. The Council Chairman, the Secretary-General or any member state may request postponement of a vote for a specific period during which further negotiations may take place on the item submitted to the vote.

#### **(Article Thirty-seven)**

1. If a member requests amendment of a proposal, voting on the amendment shall be carried out first. If there is more than one amendment, voting shall first be made on the amendment which the Chairman considers to be farthest from the original proposal, then on the next farthest, and so on until all proposed amendments have been voted upon. If one or more amendments have been voted upon. If one or more amendment is passed, then voting shall be made on the original proposal as amended.
2. A new proposal shall be deemed to be an amendment to the original proposal if it merely entails an addition to, omission from, or change to a part of the original proposal.



**(Article Thirty-eight)**

1. Any member state or the Secretary-General may propose amending these Rules of Procedure.
2. No proposed amendment to these Rules of Procedure may be considered unless the relevant proposal is circulated to the member states by the Secretariat-General at least thirty days before submission to the Council.
3. No basic changes may be introduced to the proposed amendment mentioned in the preceding item unless the texts of such proposed change have been circulated to the member states at least fifteen days prior to submission to the Council.
4. Except for items based on provisions of the Charter, and with due regard to preceding items, these Rules of Procedure shall be amended by a resolution of the Council approved by a majority of its members.

**(Article Thirty-nine)****Effective Date:**

These Rules of Procedure shall go into effect as of the date of approval by the Council and may not be amended except in accordance with procedures set forth in the preceding article.

Thus, these Rules of Procedure are signed at Abu Dhabi City, United Arab Emirates, on 21 Rajab 1401 AH corresponding to 25 May 1981 AD.

The United Arab Emirates

The State of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Sultanate of Oman

The State of Qatar

The State of Kuwait

**Rules of Procedures of the Commission For Settlement of Disputes:****Preamble:**

In accordance with the previous of Article Six of the Charter of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council; and in implementation of the Provisions of Article Ten of the Cooperation Council, a Commission for Settlement of Disputes, hereinafter referred to as Commission, shall be set up and its jurisdiction and rules for its proceeding shall be as follows:

**(Article One)****Terminology:**

Terms used in these Rules of Procedure shall have the same meanings as those established in the Charter of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council.



**(Article Two)****The location & Session of the Commission:**

The commission shall have its headquarters at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and shall hold its meetings on the territory of the state where its headquarters is located, but may hold its meetings elsewhere, when necessary.

**(Article Three)****Jurisdiction:**

The Commission shall, once installed, have jurisdiction to consider the following matters referred to it by the Supreme Council:

- a. disputes between member states.
- b. Differences of opinion as to the interpretation or implementation of the Cooperation Council Charter.

**(Article Four)****Membership of the Commission:**

- a. The Commission shall be formed of an appropriate number of citizens of member states not involved in the dispute. The Council shall select members of the Commission in every case separately depending on the nature of the dispute, provided that the number shall be no less than three.
- b. The Commission may seek the advice of such experts and consultants as it may deem necessary.
- c. Unless the Supreme Council resolves otherwise, the Commission's task shall end with the submission of its recommendations or opinion to the Supreme Council which, after the conclusion of the Commission's task, may summon it at any time to explain or elaborate on its recommendations or opinions.

**(Article Five)****Meetings and Internal Procedures:**

- a. A meeting of the Commission shall be valid if attended by all members.
- b. The Secretariat-General of the Cooperation Council shall prepare procedures required to conduct the Commission's affairs, and such procedures shall go into effect as of the date of approval by the Ministerial Council.
- c. Each party to the dispute shall send representatives to the Commission who shall be entitled to follow proceedings and present their defence.

**(Article Six)****Chairmanship:**

The Commission shall select a chairman from among its members.



**(Article Seven)****Voting:**

Every member of the Commission shall have one vote, and shall issue its recommendations or opinions on matters referred to it by a majority of the members. In the event of an indecisive vote the party with whom the Chairman has voted shall prevail.

**(Article Eight)****The Secretariat of the Commission:**

- a. The Secretary-General shall appoint a Secretary for the Commission, and a sufficient number of officials to carry out the work of the Commission's Secretariat.
- b. The Supreme Council may if necessary create an independent organisation to carry out the work of the Secretariat of the Commission.

**(Article Nine)****Recommendations & Opinions:**

- a. The Commission shall issue its recommendations or opinions in accordance with the Cooperation Council's Charter, with international laws and practices, and the principles of Islamic Shari'ah. The Commission shall submit its findings on the case in hand to the Supreme Council for appropriate action.
- b. The Commission may, while considering any dispute referred to it and pending the issue of its final recommendations thereon, ask the Supreme Council to take interim action called for by necessity or circumstances.
- c. The Commission's recommendations or opinions shall specify the reasons on which they were based and shall be signed by the Chairman and secretary.
- d. If an opinion is not passed wholly or partially by unanimous vote of the members, the dissenting members shall be entitled to record their dissenting opinion.

**(Article Ten)****Immunities and Privileges:**

The Commission and its members shall enjoy such immunities and privileges in the territories of the member states as are required to realize its objectives in accordance with Article Seventeen of the Cooperation Council Charter.

**(Article Eleven)****The Budget of the Commission:**

The Commission's budget shall be considered part of the Secretariat-General's budget. Remunerations of the Commission's members shall be established by the Supreme Council.



**(Article Twelve)****Amendments:**

- a. Any member state may request for amendments to these Rules of Procedure.
- b. Requests for amendments shall be submitted to the Secretary-General who shall relay them to the member states at least four months before submission to the Ministerial Council.
- c. An amendment shall be effective if approved unanimously by the Supreme Council.

**(Article Thirteen)****Effective Date:**

These Rules of Procedure shall go into effect as of the date of approval by the Supreme Council.

These Rules of Procedure were signed at Abu Dhabi City, United Arab Emirates on 21 Rajab 1401 AH corresponding to 25 May 1981 AD.

The United Arab Emirates

The State of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Sultanate of Oman

The State of Qatar

The State of Kuwait

**II. THE UNIFIED ECONOMIC AGREEMENT OF THE COOPERATION COUNCIL FOR THE ARAB STATES OF THE GULF**

With the help of God Almighty; The Governments of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council;

In accordance with the Charter thereof, which calls for closer relations and stronger links; and, desiring to promote, expand and enhance their economic ties on solid foundations, in the best interest of their peoples; and, intending to coordinate and unify their economic, financial and monetary policies, as well as their commercial and industrial legislation, and customs regulations; have agreed as follows:

**Chapter One : Trade Exchange:****(Article One)**

- a. The member states shall permit the importation and exportation of agricultural, animal, industrial and natural resource products that are of national origin. Also, they shall permit exportation thereof to other member states.



- b. All agricultural, animal, industrial and natural resource products that are from member states shall receive the same treatment as national products.

**(Article Two)**

1. All agricultural, animal, industrial and natural resource products that are of national origin shall be exempted from customs duties and other charges having equivalent effect.
2. Fees charged for specific services such as demurrage, storage, transportation, haulage or unloading, shall not be considered as customs duties when they are levied on domestic products.

**(Article Three)**

1. For products of national origin to qualify as national manufactured products, the value added ensuing from their production in member states shall not be less than 40 percent of their final value. In addition, the share of the member states citizens in the ownership of the producing plant shall not be less than 51 percent.
2. Every item to be exempted hereby shall be accompanied by a certificate of origin duly authenticated by the government agency concerned.

**(Article Four)**

1. Member states shall establish a uniform minimum customs tariff applicable to the products of countries other than GCC member states.
2. One of the objectives of the uniform customs tariff shall be the protection of national products from foreign competition.
3. The uniform customs tariff shall be applied gradually within five years from the date on which this agreement becomes effective. Arrangements for its gradual implementation shall be agreed upon within one year from the said date.

**(Article Five)**

Member states shall grant all facilities for the transit of any member state's goods to other member states, exempting them from any duties and taxes whatsoever, without prejudice to the provisions of Paragraph 2 of Article 2.

**(Article Six)**

Transit shall be denied to any goods that are barred from entry into the territory of a member state by its local regulations. Lists of such goods shall be exchanged between the customs authorities of the member states.

**(Article Seven)**

Member states shall coordinate their commercial policies and relations with other states and regional economic groupings and blocs with a view to creating balanced trade relations and favourable circumstances and terms of trade therewith. To achieve this goal, the member states shall make the following arrangements:

1. Coordination of import/export policies and regulations.



2. Coordination of policies for building up strategic food stocks.
3. Conclusion of collective economic agreements in cases where joint benefits to member states would be realized.
4. Taking of action for the creation of collective negotiating power to strengthen their negotiating position vis-à-vis foreign parties in the field of importation of basic needs and exportation of major products.

## **Chapter Two: Movement of Capital, Citizens, and Exercise Economic Activities**

### **(Article Eight)**

The member states shall agree on the executive rules which would insure that each member state shall grant the citizens of all other member states the same treatment granted to its own citizens without any discrimination or differentiation in the following fields:

1. Freedom of movement, work and residence.
2. Right of ownership, inheritance and bequest.
3. Freedom to exercise economic activity.
4. Free movement of capital.

### **(Article Nine)**

The member states shall encourage their respective private sectors to establish joint ventures in order to link their citizens' economic interest in the various spheres of activity.

## **Chapter Three: Coordination of Development:**

### **(Article Ten)**

The member states shall endeavor to achieve coordination and harmony among their respective development plans with a view to achieving integration in economic affairs.

### **(Article Eleven)**

1. The member states shall endeavor to coordinate their policies with regard to all aspects of the oil industry including extraction, refining, marketing, processing, pricing, exploitation of natural gas and development of energy sources.
2. The member states shall endeavor to formulate unified oil policies and adopt common positions vis-à-vis the outside world, and in the international and specialized organizations.



**(Article Twelve)**

To achieve the objectives specified in this Agreement, the member states shall perform the following:

1. Coordinate industrial activities, formulate policies and mechanisms aimed at the industrial development and the diversification of their productive bases on an integrated basis.
2. Standardize their industrial legislation and regulations and guide their local production units to meet their needs.
3. Allocate industries between member states according to relative advantages and economic feasibility, and encourage the establishment of basic as well as ancillary industries.

**(Article Thirteen)**

Within the framework of their coordinating activities, the member states shall pay special attention to the establishment of joint ventures in the fields of industry, agriculture and services, and shall support them with public, private or mixed capital in order to achieve economic integration, productive interface and common development on sound economic bases.

**Chapter Four: Technical Cooperation****(Article Fourteen)**

The member states shall collaborate in finding spheres for common technical cooperation aimed at building a genuine local base founded on encouragement and support of research and applied sciences and technology as well as adapting imported technology to meet the needs of the region and to achieve the objectives of progress and development.

**(Article Fifteen)**

The member states shall establish procedures, make arrangements and lay down terms for the transfer of technology, selecting the most suitable or introducing such changes thereto as would serve their various needs. Member states shall also, whenever feasible, conclude uniform agreements with foreign governments and scientific or commercial firms to achieve these objectives.

**(Article Sixteen)**

The member states shall formulate policies and implement coordinated programs for technical, vocational and professional training and qualification at all levels and stages. They shall also upgrade educational curricula at all levels to link education and technology with the development needs of the member states.



**(Article Seventeen)**

The member states shall coordinate their manpower policies and shall formulate uniform and standardised criteria and classifications for the various categories of occupations and crafts in different sectors in order to avoid harmful competition among themselves and to optimize the utilization of available human resources.

**Chapter Five: Transportation and Communication:****(Article Eighteen)**

The member states shall accord means of passenger and cargo transportation belonging to citizens of the other member states, when transiting or entering their territory, the same treatment they accord to the means of passenger and cargo transportation belonging to their own citizens, including exemptions from all duties and taxes whatsoever. However, local means of transportation are excluded.

**(Article Nineteen)**

1. The member states shall cooperate in the fields of land and sea transportation and communication. They shall also coordinate and establish infrastructure projects such as seaports, airports, water and power stations and roads, with a view to realising common economic development and linking their economic activities with each other.
2. The contracting states shall coordinate aviation and air transport policies among them and promote all spheres of joint activities at various levels.

**(Article Twenty)**

The member states shall allow steamers, ships and boats and their cargoes, belonging to any member state freely to use the various port facilities and grant them the same treatment and privileges granted to their own in docking or calling at the ports as concerns fees, pilotage, and docking services, haulage, loading and unloading, maintenance, repair, storage of goods and other similar services.

**Chapter Six: Financial and Monetary Cooperation****(Article Twenty-one)**

The member states shall seek to unify investment in order to achieve a common investment policy aimed at directing their internal and external investments towards serving their interest, and realizing their peoples' aspirations in development and progress.



**(Article Twenty-two)**

The member states shall seek to coordinate their financial, monetary and banking policies and enhance cooperation between monetary agencies and central banks, including an endeavor to establish a common currency in order to further their desired economic integration.

**(Article Twenty-three)**

Member states shall seek to coordinate their external policies in the sphere of international and regional development aid.

**Chapter Seven: Closing Provisions:****(Article Twenty-four)**

In the execution of the Agreement and determination of the procedures resulting therefrom, consideration shall be given to differences in the levels of development between the member states and the local development priorities of each. Any member state may be temporarily exempted from applying such provisions of this Agreement as may be necessitated by temporary local situations in that state or specific circumstances faced by it. Such exemption shall be for a specified period and shall be decided by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Council.

**(Article Twenty-five)**

No member state shall give to any non-member state any preferential privilege exceeding that given herein.

**(Article Twenty-six)**

- a. This Agreement shall enter into force four months after its approval by the Supreme Council.
- b. This Agreement may be amended by consent from the Supreme Council.

**(Article Twenty-seven)**

In case of conflict with local laws and regulations of member states, execution of the provisions of this Agreement shall prevail.

**(Article Twenty-eight)**

Provisions herein shall supersede any similar provisions contained in bilateral agreements.

Drawn up at Riyadh on 15 Muharram 1402, corresponding to 11 November 1982.



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